HPass

Humanitarian Assessment Provider Handbook

Guidance and support for implementing the assessment provider standards

Pilot Version | March 2018

The assessment provider standards aim to improve the quality of assessment linked to humanitarian action and give people confidence in their ability to help communities who are vulnerable to or affected by crises.

This handbook and associated standards are based on extensive consultation by a consortium made up of the Bioforce Institute, the Humanitarian Leadership Academy, Pearson and RedR UK. They are the result of a joint drafting process involving many people and organisations, and do not represent the views of any one organisation.

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Acknowledgements

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Glossary

Assessment services – services you offer to candidates to assess competencies, knowledge, skills and attitudes.

You (the assessment provider) - organisations, companies, departments, groups and institutes providing competency assessment services to anyone involved in humanitarian action.

Candidates – people whose competencies are being assessed.

Competencies – a set of behaviors a person must demonstrate, based on their knowledge, skills and experiences, to perform effectively in a given situation.

Competency frameworks – an established group of competencies needed to carry out specific roles.

Humanitarian action – action taken to save lives, reduce suffering and maintain human dignity during and after crises and natural disasters, as well as action to prevent and prepare for them. (Adapted from ALNAP's Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide 2016, page 369.)

Key actions – action you take to achieve the standards.

Modality – the method you use to conduct assessments, for example online tests, simulation exercises, oral exams and written tests.

Quality assurance mechanisms - quality assurance mechanisms provide an opportunity for you to conduct a self-evaluation and a third-party judgement about your conformity to the learning provider standards.

Quality indicator - suggested forms of evidence that a key action has been taken.

Quality measure - something tangible that allows a judgement to be made as to whether a key action has been taken (or not taken)

Resources – money, materials, staff and other assets that a person or organisation needs to be able to carry out their work.

Standards – requirements, specifications, guidelines or characteristics that can be used consistently to make sure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose (ISO definition https://www.iso.org/standards.html). In this document they describe what you should do to meet the overall commitment that those involved in humanitarian action will have access to high-quality learning programmes that will allow them to work more effectively.

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Introduction

The creation of global humanitarian learning provider standards (led by RedR UK) and assessment provider standards (led by the Bioforce Institute) has been facilitated by a partnership between the Bioforce Institute, Pearson and RedR UK, with funding and support from the Humanitarian Leadership Academy.

We designed this handbook to support you, assessment providers, to understand and implement the newly developed assessment provider standards. All guidance provided in this handbook is optional.

The standards aim to improve the quality of assessment linked to humanitarian action and give people confidence in their ability to help communities who are vulnerable to or affected by crises.

Who are the intended users of this handbook?

This handbook is for organisations, companies, departments and institutes who provide assessment services to anyone involved in humanitarian action and who want to adopt the assessment provider standards.

Assessment services are defined as a process where individuals' competencies, knowledge, skills and behaviours are evaluated and recognised by an independent assessment provider. These services may be provided by an independent assessment provider or as part of an organization's internal human resources function.

Assessment services may take place:
- at the end of the learning process,
- during recruitment activities,
- as part of professional development and progression,
- at any point when a staff member or candidate wants to have their competencies assessed.

What are the benefits of using this handbook?

This handbook will help you to understand and prepare what needs to be in place to make sure the assessment services are of a high quality. This handbook is offering **you guidance on how to implement the key actions**, illustrated with examples, good practices, and case studies.

If we all have the same understanding of what quality assessment services is, thanks to the assessment provider standards, this handbook will help you contextualize and apply them in a way that is appropriate in your settings.

How to use this handbook?

There are seven assessment provider standards, each with associated key actions. They provide criteria to measure the quality of assessment services that you are providing. You can use them as a basis for checking your performance and to guide improvements.

We have designed the standards so that they are flexible enough to be used by different types of assessment providers and circumstances in different regions, countries, areas and communities.

To meet the standards, you must carry out the key actions. Key actions are what need to be in place to make sure the assessment services are of a high quality.

This handbook contains guidance and suggestions on how to carry out each key action including:

- Explanations and considerations for applying the standards.
- Example of best practice in the form of case studies and stories from different regions.
- Further resources, reading and information.
- Supporting tools and templates that you can use or adapt for your own purposes.

Quality Assurance Mechanisms

Associated with the standards are quality assurance mechanisms (QAM). The QAM provide an opportunity for you to conduct a self-evaluation and a third-party judgement about your conformity to the learning provider standards.

These include quality measures and quality indicators.

Quality Measure – something tangible that allows a judgement to be made whether a key action has been taken (or not taken)

Quality Indicator – suggested forms of evidence

In this handbook we have included relevant quality measures and indicators for each key action. The quality indicators are only suggestions, different providers may have different forms of evidence.

Please refer to the quality manual for more information about QAM.

HPass Initiative

We produced this handbook as part of HPass, an initiative focusing on professional development in the humanitarian sector. HPass is a digital platform where humanitarian workers and volunteers, employers, credentialing bodies, and learning providers like you can meet.

HPass is an opportunity for learning and assessment providers to join a global platform, sign up to the sector-recognised standards and provide digital badges for both learners completing their courses and people whose competencies are being assessed.

With HPass, any humanitarian, whether they are a volunteer or an experienced field worker, will have the opportunity to have their experience and learning formally recognised throughout our sector.

HPass will also be accessible by humanitarian employers, who will be able to search for individuals by their skills and experience, increasing the speed and efficiency of recruitment during an emergency or to meet ongoing operational needs.

HPass is brought to you by a group of humanitarian organisations that are passionate about learning and ensuring that the sector grows and is recognised for its skills and expertise.

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Overview of the assessment provider standards

Overall Commitment

People involved in humanitarian action are able to provide a record showing that they have the competencies to carry out humanitarian work, which will lead to better employment and volunteering opportunities.

Standard 1. Analysis

Relevant assessment needs are identified

Standard 2. Design

Assessment programmes are designed and prepared according to identified needs

Standard 3. Delivery

Assessments are delivered effectively and accurately

Standard 4. Evaluation and accountability

The quality of assessment services is maintained and improved

Standard 5. Resources

There are enough appropriate resources

Standard 6. Communication

Communication is open and accessible

Standard 7. Administration

Administration systems are secure and accurate

Guidance and supporting materials

Standard 1 - Analysis
Relevant assessment needs are identified

Why is this standard important?

The design of an appropriate assessment process for candidates must be preceded with analysis of their needs and assessment mechanisms available to meet their needs. People and organisations seek out assessment services for many different reasons. It is your role to understand those needs and select and design appropriate assessment solutions to meet them. Analysis may also reveal where assessment is not the right pathway for candidates at a particular time or issues with eligibility.

Overall guidance

Analysing the assessment needs is a process whereby you compare the overall assessment objectives of candidates with competency assessment mechanisms available and match these accordingly.

The primary users of an assessment service are:

Individuals who seek to have their competencies assessed (referred to here as candidates). Candidates will normally pay for the assessment service themselves. Examples of overall objectives may be: to further their career prospects by having recognised competencies; or to identify his/her own strengths and areas of improvement to perform a job role.

Client organisations that send candidates to you. Client organisations are defined as government bodies, departments or institutions; UN agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement; national or international NGOs and community-based organisations that pursue

Good Practice

The identification of Nutrition in Emergencies (NiE) competencies consisted of four stages. First, existing competency frameworks, course curricula and emergency nutrition job specifications were reviewed and relevant competencies extracted. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a convenience sample of 'field experts' working for humanitarian organisations. Third, participants from NIE courses held in Uganda, Thailand and Lebanon in 2010 and 2011 were contacted to identify which skills they felt were essential for their roles in emergency nutrition. Finally, the compiled list of competencies was reviewed by members of the Capacity Development Working Group of the Global Nutrition Cluster.
(http://www.ennonline.net/fex/47/development)

assessment services from an assessment provider like you. Candidates sent to you from client organisations may be :

Potential employees who are being assessed as part of a client organisation's recruitment process to ensure the recruits have the right competencies to fulfil a job function;

Employees who are being assessed as part of their organisation's performance management system. The assessment will ensure there is evidence-based monitoring and evaluation of employee competence and that any gaps are identified; and/or

Employees who have taken part in learning/training/a capacity building process. As a result of participation, the client organization may wish to measure changes in staff competence.

While client organisations will have their own motivation for sending candidates for assessment, you need to ensure they have agreed an overall assessment objective with each candidate individually.

For example, Candidate X wants to demonstrate her competence in leadership because she is interested in applying for management positions, you may discuss her overall goal for the assessment and eligibility to participate. There may be several outcomes:

- If Candidate X meets the eligibility requirements and you are offering that service, you will go on to analyse and select or design an assessment process for the individual.

- If you does not provide assessments for the knowledge, skills or competency required, you may refer the candidate to another assessment provider.

- If Candidate X is not eligible for the assessment service, you may advise her on the steps she would need to take to become eligible. She may need further capacity building (training, coaching) or experience before she is ready to apply for assessment.

The assessment process for client organisations begins differently in the case that candidates are sent to you for pre-agreed services (ex: recruitment, performance management). Regardless, each candidate must meet eligibility requirements and agree the overall assessment objective with you to participate in assessment services.

Once the overall objectives are defined, you may take steps to match the needs of candidates to appropriate competency frameworks. Where there are no existing competency frameworks, you may develop new ones to meet candidates' specific needs.

Specific guidance relating to each Key Action

Key Action 1.1 Identify and evaluate candidates' overall objectives for the assessment

Quality measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. A nominated role or team in place to conduct candidates' objectives for assessment. 2. An auditable record that states the overall objectives of the assessment for each candidate. 3. A written evaluation of the overall assessment objectives.	1. Assessment policy (including assessment of distance or online candidates). 2. Candidate application / interview/ selection /registration records. 3. Candidates' self-assessment records. 4. Candidate portfolios and profiles. 5. Feedback from candidates (e.g. questionnaires). 6. Process to identify and evaluate candidates' assessment objectives. 7. Records of interviews with candidates. 8. Documents that confirm agreement of assessment objectives. 9. Nominated role(s) for identifying and evaluating objectives of assessment. 10. Interviews with candidates.

The overall assessment objective is the candidate's over-riding motivation for using the assessment service. Most commonly, candidates' (and/or their employers) will be looking to recognise and validate their existing skills, knowledge or competencies. Candidates may pursue different objectives, and those can be around motivation as overall goal, but also as the form of recognition desired: "I want certificate B2".

If you are a large Assessment Provider, you may consider establishing formal recognition systems that align to government regulation. The table below gives an example from the Australian government on levels of recognition with a brief explanation of expected outcomes for graduates of each level. In this example, the candidate is a graduate.

Recognition Levels	Summary

	Graduates at this level will have:
Certificate I	The knowledge and skills for initial work, community involvement and/or further learning
Certificate II	Basic factual and theoretical knowledge for community involvement and entry level work
Certificate III	Theoretical and practical knowledge and skills for work
Certificate IV	Theoretical and practical knowledge and skills for specialised work and/or further learning.
Diploma	Specialised knowledge and skills for skilled/paraprofessional work and/or further learning

Other, less formal, forms of recognition may also form the basis of a candidate's overall assessment objective. Below are some examples of recognitions that may be endorsed by a professional body:

Type of recognition	Summary Successful candidates at this level will have:
Digital Badge, Open Badge	Flexible digital credential that may be used as a "micro-credential" to recognise knowledge or skills, or may be more informally used to indicate an achievement or affiliation. The term Open Badge denotes a digital badge created according to an accepted international standard which makes it portable across different systems that support the standard. HPass badges are Open Badges. If used as a "micro-credential" to recognise knowledge and/or skills, an Open Badge may do so at different levels of rigour, levels of achievement or granularity, as a certificate or a certification.. Like any credential, a badge must typically be examined to determine its value as evidence of knowledge or skills. However, HPass is putting policy and technology measures in place to scale up this process of badge recognition to make Open Badges a useful way to recognise knowledge and skills across the humanitarian sector.

Certificate	Demonstrated ability to apply a defined level of technical or functional knowledge and skills according to a professional body. (Several badges may lead to a candidate achieving a certificate.) An example of this is the PHAP Credentialing Program which offers flexible and verifiable professional micro- certifications in competencies especially relevant to humanitarian work, developed in line with the international standard for professional certification ISO 17024.

The recognitions above, if endorsed widely by the humanitarian community, can be an ideal assessment solution to be offered by smaller assessment providers, humanitarian organisations that incorporate assessment services into their operations and online assessment providers.

More information about modes of recognition can be found in Standard 3: Delivery.

The process for agreeing an assessment objective is defined below:

1. **Contact (Pre-Application)** - Initially, candidates or client organisations contact you to seek information on assessments (*See also Standard 6 - Communication*). You can help them to have realistic expectations of the services, by proactively sharing organisational information and documentation about the criteria for participation, scope of services and the process involved.

2. **Application** - Candidates prepare and submit their application. Applications normally include:
   ● A completed application form (Annex: Sample application form) duly filled with the handwritten or electronic signature of the candidate.
   ● A signed declaration that the information provided is accurate and true.
   ● A self-assessment that describes the candidate's prior experience in relation to the competency to be assessed (professional or voluntary positions, training, skills and knowledge) (Annex: Self-Assessment Example)
   ● Portfolio: A paper-based or electronic document to provide evidence of current level of experience, training, knowledge, skills and attitudes. This may include diplomas, employer letters, certificates etc. (Annex: Sample of portfolio/dossier)

   A record of candidates' involvement in assessment services begins when an application is made to when assessment results are delivered. Candidates' applications for assessment

and their participation as a candidate in the assessment process need to be registered and recorded to ensure accountability and to facilitate the tracking of progress.

This application process should be accessible to accommodate those with special circumstances, such as visual impairments, literacy level, but also access to internet in case of an online registration process. You should take reasonable measures to ensure that applications are accessible to those with higher and lower levels of information communication technology and those who are based in remote field locations.

3. **Application Review** - You should review applications and on the basis of eligibility criteria determine if the application is accepted, reviewed or should be resubmitted (for example with additional information and evidence).

   The eligibility process can adopt different forms. For example:
   - Provider X has a reference person to organise the application dossier from each candidate and using the eligibility checklist this person decides on eligibility. (Annex: Eligibility checklist)
   - Provider Z, also has a reference person but the task is just to look at the administrative component of the application, and then a committee decides on the professional or experience-based requirements.

   Candidates should be accepted or denied admission in a fair manner according to your assessment policy (Annex: Sample of assessment policy key elements). Both administrative elements and professional or experience-based elements should be taken into account to accept or deny a new candidate. Candidates/client organisations need to have an opportunity to clarify if their information is incomplete or unclear in the application.

   Admission can be "partial". You may admit the candidate as eligible for part of the competences' assessment, and offer the possibility to follow one training to validate the rest of the competences. This is the case when you can offer a sequence of assessments. If this is the case a deadline should be established. *For quality learning opportunities refer to the Learning Provider Standards and the providers that have subscribed to it or have the HPass approved status according to it.*

   In the event that the candidate/ client organisation disagrees with the decision about admission to the process, you need to have in place a complaint mechanism and a

protocol to solve and respond, with clear deadlines. *For more information about accountability please refer to Standard 4 Evaluation and Accountability.*

4. **Deciding upon the assessment objective** - Once candidates are admitted to the assessment process, you and the candidate determine together the overall assessment objective. You should be able to explain the requirements, process and benefits of the different types of assessment and guide the candidates to identify overall objectives. Where a client organisation has requested the assessment of a candidate, you should ensure that all involved parties are in agreement on the overall assessment objective.

You can, also, conclude this identification of objectives by referring the candidate to other existing assessment services, outside of your own services, like for example PHAP credentialing services. This can be the case when those external services better correspond to all or part of the candidate's objectives.

Key Action 1.2 List the specific areas of competence that candidates are to be assessed against

Quality measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. A list of specific competencies to be assessed.	1. Lists of specific competencies to be assessed from a relevant competency framework. 2. Mapping tool. 3. Records of interviews with candidates. 4. Nominated role(s) with responsibility for preparing lists of competences. 5. Process to prepare lists.

This step is for you to predetermine what are the target competencies areas the candidate wish to be assessed against: administration, logistics, nutrition, project management… You will look at the experience of the candidate and the relevant frameworks in the sector. Then, you will look at specific skills, knowledge and/or competencies need to be assessed for candidates to reach their assessment objective. During this process of identifying the competency domain, you might also identify the levels, but not necessarily, this can also come later in the assessment process. The point is that if the candidate has no experience, you will just design something to assess knowledge, and nothing else.

One reference tool for breaking down competencies can be the competency framework. The design of competency frameworks is not globally standardised but typically they can be organised in different layers, as follows:
- a number of competency domains or dimensions (usually from 2 to 4, although some frameworks do have more)
- some areas of focus
- competencies
- and behaviours

Usually those competency frameworks are useful to assess people against each of the competencies that comprise the area of focus or competency domain. *See Key Action 1.3 for more information about competency frameworks.*

As we said before, the application process will help to clarify expectations between you and candidates/client organisations. You may use more in-depth interviews with candidates and/or client organisations to agree the specific areas. Also, you can offer a tool to the candidate to map how his/her experiences and training matches with the skills and knowledge required for the certification or badge s/he is aiming for. (Annex: Sample table for candidates learning and experiences mapping)

Where client organisations are involved, it may be helpful to gather job descriptions of candidates and use them as a basis for selecting the specific competencies.

Some organizations might have entire competency frameworks that can be used (UNICEF for example has a competency framework since 2010 and has developed specific guidelines for assessing competencies in interviews in each general job description and at several levels - ex Emergency junior/middle/senior).

Once agreed, the specific competency areas to be assessed should be acknowledged in writing between you, the client organisation (if applicable) and the candidate. (Annex: Sample of written acknowledgement of specific area(s) of competence.)

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Key Action 1.3 Identify existing competency frameworks within humanitarian and other sectors

Quality measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. A list or catalogue of relevant existing competency frameworks in the humanitarian and other sectors.	1. A hard copy or online access to a list or catalogue of relevant existing competency frameworks in the humanitarian and other sectors. 2. Process to identify existing competency frameworks. 3. Research of competency frameworks within the humanitarian and other sectors. 4. Nominated role for research.

To provide an effective assessment service, it is essential to have an understanding of the frameworks that are already established in the humanitarian sector or related sectors and whether these can be used to assess the identified specific areas of competence, and therefore to fulfil the overall assessment objective.

To meet this Key Action you need to systematically keep a list or a catalogue of the existing relevant competency frameworks available.

Useful sources for identifying existing competency frameworks are:

Source	Examples:
Humanitarian networks and platforms	Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework - articulates core humanitarian behaviours agreed by a broad range of humanitarian actors and agencies, and integrated into the HPass initiative. Child Protection in Emergencies Competency Framework - created by the Child Protection Working Group aims to be inclusive of priorities, approaches and structures of different organisations carrying out humanitarian work. Humanitarian Action Qualifications Framework - Related to the CHCF (above), it describes the knowledge, skills and responsibilities required of all humanitarians. The framework

	has 8 levels and covers 6 dimensions: service to affected people, collaborative relationships, leadership, coping and safety, context analysis and reflection and humanitarian commitment. Technical Competency Framework for Nutrition in Emergencies Practitioners - articulates behaviours in three levels for 20 different competency domains
Humanitarian organisations	UNICEF-has developed specific guidelines for assessing competencies in interviews in each general job description and at several levels - ex emergency and junior/middle/senior. Client organisations may serve as a resource for gathering existing relevant competency frameworks.
National government	National disaster management agencies or government ministries may have accepted competency frameworks for disaster management and other technical competencies.
Learning and assessment providers	Some of them may have develop their own competency frameworks as tools to design learning products and assessment services, for example, the Bioforce Institute or the Noha university network

Key Action 1.4. Analyse the relevance of the identified competency frameworks

Quality measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. A recorded analysis of identified competency frameworks. (Cross reference to 1.2)	1. Analysis paperwork / electronic documentation showing relevance of the identified framework. 2. Process for analysis of relevance of identified frameworks. 3. Minutes of staff meetings to discuss frameworks.

To determine the relevance of the identified competency framework, you will compare candidates' overall objectives and specific areas of competence (and job descriptions, if applicable) to available competency frameworks. You may find more than one competency framework that is relevant to the candidate and the selection will take into consideration which competency framework will:

- Facilitate the candidate to reach their overall objective
- Most likely be recognised by relevant stakeholders for the candidate (employers, volunteer agencies, government) or to the client organisation (donors, government)

Periodic reviews of competency frameworks

The relevance of the selected competency frameworks should periodically be reviewed and updated according to new developments in the sector. A review can also help to identify newly created/revised competency frameworks that may become available.

Periodically, competency frameworks may be adjusted or adapted to address new demands for staff competencies and you should monitor those changes or adjustments made to the frameworks they might be using. You might use relevant representative stakeholders to validate and suggest relevant adaptations for the context. Relevant stakeholders for validation may include donors, humanitarian forums, sector/cluster coordination groups, technical specialists, programme managers, academia etc.

Key Action 1.5 Select and use existing relevant competency frameworks or create new ones

Quality measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. A reason or reasons for selecting an existing competency framework. 2. A design plan for a new competency framework.	1. Process to determine reasons for choice of framework. 2. Assessment records that prove use of selected framework. 3. Documents to show creation phase of developed and new competency framework. 4. Clear competency statements. 5. Process to use the selected or created framework. 6. Competency framework. 7. Minutes of meetings to select an existing framework. 8. Minutes of meetings to develop new competency framework.

Based on the analysis, you would select appropriate competency frameworks that will meet the overall assessment objective and specific competence areas of client organisations and candidates. There is no need to create a new competency framework if existing competency frameworks meet the needs.

The justification for the selection of a particular competency framework should be documented and recorded in the candidate's file for evidence and future reference.

You may find that you can use existing competency frameworks, but that they need to be modified or adapted to the context. For example, the CHCF Framework corresponds to the needs of many humanitarian organisations but it may be appropriate to add further skills or knowledge specific to a particular client organisation or a particular job role. The Guide to the CHCF is a useful tool which gives detailed information on how to use and adapt humanitarian core competencies for different needs.

Where you have increasing demand for assessment services in skills, knowledge or competencies outside of your current offer, you may decide to create a new competency framework. The decision to create new competency frameworks should not be taken lightly as it can be resource-intense and time-consuming. Where possible, it is helpful to coordinate or collaborate with other

assessment providers to establish agreed competency frameworks that will be widely accepted in humanitarian action.

Where you take the decision to create competency frameworks, you should, establish a robust and evidence-based process to ensure they will be credible in the humanitarian sector. <u>You should document your process for creating any new competency framework to demonstrate their validity.</u> Below are the general steps for creating a new relevant competency framework.

- Research - using existing job descriptions, training curriculum and elements of related competency frameworks (*Such as those listed in the Table under Key Action 1.3*).
- Design - list and describe competencies, layers, levels for each layer if applicable, etc.
- Validate- speak to relevant stakeholders to ensure all elements of the competency are captured.
- Pilot- test the competency framework by using it for a trial period and then reviewing.
- Finalise- establish the new competency framework and procedures for its review.

All assessment processes require competency statements that are easy-to-understand. The descriptions and criteria are used by assessors to guide the assessment process. These criteria serve as the "roadmap" to help candidates determine how well their expected knowledge, skills and competencies match the expected standards. They help to identify gaps and relevant sources and types of evidence needed for a successful assessment.

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Key Action 1.6 Decide on appropriate assessment modalities for the candidate

Quality measures	Suggested quality indicators

1. Reasons for the selection of the assessment modality for each candidate.	1. Assessment policy (including candidates at a distance or online learners).
	2. Individual assessment records showing consideration of:
	    a) access to and familiarity with IT
	    b) language
	    c) cultural / social norms
	    d) location
	3. Interview / meeting with candidates and staff.
	4. Records of meetings held to discuss assessment modalities.
	5. Records that show adaptation of modalities for specific candidates.
	6. Contextualisation of assessment tools.
	7. Process to determine appropriate assessment modalities.

An assessment modality is defined as a method or procedure for evaluating candidates' competencies. Each modality has a particular strength, purpose and value, but also certain limitations. You must weigh available modalities against a candidate's overall assessment objective and assessment policies to determine the best way forward.

Appropriate modalities should be clearly adapted to the objectives of the assessment in terms of what level of knowledge, skills or full competencies are being assessed; also, modalities will be dependent on the candidates' preferences, needs and personal conditions. For instance, if the objective is to assess the knowledge of a literate candidate, then a written test is appropriate; but if the objective is to assess full competencies, probably a portfolio of evidence is most appropriate.

The modalities selected should aim to be inclusive and take into consideration the following elements of the context:

- **Access and familiarity with technology** - Unless directly related to the requirements of the competency, candidates should not be expected to use unfamiliar or advanced

technology to complete the assessment process. For example, written tests may be favoured over on-line testing where candidates may be less familiar with technology. Also where candidates will not have reliable access to technology, face to face methods should be favoured. For example, those based outside of urban areas and remote field locations.

- **Language** - The modality selected should give candidates equal chance of passing regardless of their knowledge of a non-native language. Choose modalities that will give candidates the best possible chance to succeed regardless of their language skills.
- **Cultural/Social Norms** - Be sensitive to cultural and social customs that may inhibit candidates' ability to fully participate in assessment activities. For example, it may not be appropriate in all contexts for men and women to participate in a simulation together or to sit an exam in a mixed gender space.
- **Location** - Candidates who are based in cities will likely have better access to information and communications technology and transportation options than those who are based in remote or rural areas. Modalities selected should be reasonably accessible for the candidate.

These considerations should feed into the overall analysis and design of the assessment to ensure that the results are specific to the candidate and his/her context. This will enable you to design and deliver services that are closely aligned to candidate's needs and circumstances (*See Standards 3 for further information about delivery*).

You may need to discuss available modalities with candidates so their preferences can be taken into account. Indeed, some people will be more comfortable demonstrating their competencies in a professional situation and others may prefer to present their portfolio before a jury. You have to bear in mind that assessments generally cause candidates a high degree of anxiety. People involved in the assessment process must take care to provide appropriate support to candidates, particularly if they are unfamiliar with a particular assessment tool or process.

Nevertheless, assessments should also test competencies as applied in an environment reasonably similar to the reality in which they will likely be deployed (for example: excessive workload, competing priorities, insecurity and others, which are common situations in humanitarian work). A person can be an excellent planner in a normal situation, but might not function equally well in a context of limited information or resources and need for fast delivery. This should be taken into account in designing assessments, and can be related to the modality of the assessment (for example simulations).

Modalities selected should take into account candidates' prior experience using a CV, performance management reports, training certifications or other documentary evidence. Modalities should also consider prior academic or technical qualifications and diplomas.

In some countries there is a network of advisors, "*conseillers*", to help candidates to analyse all the possibilities and to confirm the relevance of each approach to achieve the candidate's goals compared to other existing mechanisms.

Often a combination of modalities is used to make a holistic assessment. The most frequent modalities are:
- **Self-assessment** - A process conducted by the candidate in which s/he ascertains personal and professional strengths and weaknesses on different competencies. It raises the awareness of the candidate on her own competencies and limits of expertise and on how closely she matches the requirements of a certain position or certificate. There are two main types of self-assessment:
  - Self-directed, when they are used by individuals on their own.
  - Interpretive, when they are shared with others (for example, discussed with a peer or an advisor).

  Frequently self-assessment are used in combination with other modalities; sometimes they are completed before a candidate applies for a formal assessment, to determine eligibility. Generally, the results of a self-assessment are most useful for the candidate, to reflect on her competencies.
- **Oral exam/interview** - An assessor or a jury/panel of professionals in the subject matter of the competency and assessors poses questions to the candidate, who responds verbally and whose responses are evaluated against previously established criteria. The interview can also happen at the end of the professional situation test, to analyse it and ask for complementary information. Oral interviews can be structured or unstructured, for example with open-ended questions. They are useful to evaluate a candidate's knowledge of concepts and theory, her problem-solving capacities, interpersonal and communications skills. This modality is often used in conjunction with other modalities.
- **Written examination** - This modality can be useful for assessing a candidate's knowledge, as well as problem solving skills and communication skills. It can take different forms: essay, problem-based scenario, multiple choice test, short answer and others. Can be paper- or computer-based, therefore it requires literacy and in case of a computer-based written examination, also requires computer literacy.
- **Portfolio** - A collection of products (documents, video, audio, multimedia or any other form), gathered by the person being assessed, which provide evidence of the achievement of specific competencies through their personal or professional experience.

Professional experiences include actual activities that the candidate has carried out in a professional or voluntary setting and one-off or continuous training linked to the competency.

The portfolio will also include documentary evidence that demonstrates the candidate has the required competency. This could be in the form of a presentation of a project completed by the candidate, with the project budget and monitoring and evaluation system and/or certificates from seminars, training, a video, and so on.

- **Professional situation test** or **On-the-job assessment -** This modality is much more specific to the candidate and will be realised through a series of agreed activities. It includes opportunities for the candidate to demonstrate her competency in real or simulated activities. Candidates must be aware of the fact that professional situation test can vary widely, with different steps and diverse level of support from the provider. Candidates need all this information in advance to better prepare for it.
- **Simulation** - Constructed reproduction of professional situations resembling actual scenarios during which the candidate is required to perform tasks and is directly observed and evaluated by the assessors. This modality is similar to the professional situation test, but it is characterized by the use of simulated scenarios or activities rather than real ones. It is frequently used at the end of emergency preparedness and response trainings.
- **Performance evaluation** - An evaluation of performance most frequently conducted by the supervisor of the candidate. They take place within the structure of an organization, and are frequently part of career development for employees.
- **360 evaluation** - An evaluation of performance based on feedback from multiple persons in the sphere of influence of the candidate (supervisor, supervisees, peers, others).

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Annexes (Tools and templates)

Relevant Key Action	Tool/Template	Annex number
1.1	Sample application form	Annex 1
1.1	Self - assessment example	Annex 2
1.1	Sample of portfolio / dossier	Annex 3
1.1	Eligibility checklist	Annex 4
1.1	Sample of assessment policy – key elements	Annex 5
1.2	Sample table for candidates learning and experience mapping	Annex 6
1.2	Sample of written acknowledgment of specific area(s) of competence	Annex 7

Annex 5 - Sample assessment policy

The Objective of Assessment carried out by the Assessment Provider
[what is being assessed; why is it being assessed; purpose]

Who will Perform Assessments?
[Titles of roles (not people's names)]

Where will Assessment Take Place?
[workplace; classroom; on location]

When will Assessment Take Place?
[at the end of a course; during the learning process; monthly/ weekly/daily on the job]

Methodology of Assessment
[tests; assessment of a portfolio of evidence; observation]

Standardisation of Assessment

[assessor training; standardisation sessions and exercises; cross checking]

Communication of Assessment Outcomes
[methods; responsibilities; timing; format]

Security of Storing Assessment Outcomes
[methods; forms; online records; IT security]

OWNER OF POLICY
VERSION / DATE
DATE OF REVIEW

Further Resources and Information related to Standard 1: Analysis

Child Protection Working Group (2010) Child Protection in Emergencies Competency Framework
http://unicefinemergencies.com/downloads/eresource/docs/2.6%20Child%20Protection/Inter-agency_CPIE_Competencies_Final__colour-1%5B1%5D.pdf

CHS Alliance (20XX) Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework
https://www.chsalliance.org/files/files/CHCF%20-%20Framework.pdf

CHS Alliance (2017) A Guide to the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework: Supporting Humanitarians to Work Effectively
https://www.chsalliance.org/files/files/CHCF%20Guide%20FINAL%20Nov%2017.pdf

CHS Alliance and HIAS Africa (2016) Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework Case Study
https://www.chsalliance.org/files/files/Resources/Case-Studies/Core-humanitarian-competencies-framework-case-study-HIAS.pdf

DFID (2016) Technical Competency Framework for Humanitarian Cadre
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/553182/HumanitarianISept16.pdf

EUPRHA (2014) Humanitarian Qualifications Action Framework
https://www.euhap.eu/haqf/

Government of Australia (2016) Fact Sheet: Providing quality training and assessment services to students with disabilities

https://www.asqa.gov.au/news-publications/publications/fact-sheets/providing-quality-training-and-assessment-services-students

Nutrition Cluster (2013) Technical Competency Framework for Nutrition in Emergencies https://www.ucl.ac.uk/igh/research/a-z/related-docs-images/technical-competency-framework-for-nie-2013.07.25.pdf

UCL (2013) Technical Competency Framework for Nutrition in Emergencies Practitioners https://www.ucl.ac.uk/igh/research/a-z/related-docs-images/technical-competency-framework-for-nie-2013.07.25.pdf

UNICEF (2009) Competency Definitions and Behavioural Indicators https://www.unicef.org/about/employ/files/UNICEF_Competencies.pdf

Standard 2 - Design

Assessment programmes are designed and prepared according to identified needs

Why is this standard important?

Assessment programmes should effectively support the candidate's goals. To determine the right content and format, the assessment design process should take into consideration all of the elements analysed as outlined in Standard 1 on Analysis: the candidate's overall objectives and motivations, specific areas of competence and levels to be assessed and available competency assessment frameworks and modalities. This process is crucial for ensuring assessment programmes cover the right content and format in a way that most effectively supports the candidate's goals.

Overall Guidance

You should ensure the best quality in the design and preparation of assessment programmes. **Design of assessments** refers to determining, in relation to the competencies to be assessed and the overall objectives of the candidates, what are the most adequate structure (simple or in multiple parts), content (focusing on the competencies to be assessed) and delivery modalities (what format and tools are the most effective and fit for purpose to assess knowledge, skills, attitudes or behaviours?). The content of an assessment should be based on widely accepted competency frameworks, on policy, practice or research. The assessment modality should draw on the best practices in the industry, where possible.

Preparation of assessments refers to all steps related to the development of the assessment, including:
- the elaboration of assessment tools, such as questionnaires, exercises, simulations, interviews, tests and so on;
- and the preparation of the assessors who will deliver the assessment.

During the preparation, appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that assessments respond to the principles of accessibility, impartiality, inclusivity (*for the definition of these principles, refer to the Assessment Providers Standards*). Other important elements are reliability (identical

results are achieved every time a candidate is assessed under the same conditions) and fairness (assessment decisions are free from bias such as context, culture or assessor bias)[1].

It is important that a candidate-centred approach is adopted from the start: the assessment programme should help candidates to become more self-aware of their current level of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours in relation to competencies required in humanitarian job functions.

Assessment design should be done with the participation of a range of stakeholders to ensure industry or sector relevance and they should be linked to national qualification systems and frameworks, if feasible. Client organisations should be included in the design team when possible.

> In Australia, the Standards for Registered Training Organizations (RTOs) determine that to be compliant, an organization should also ensure **industry relevance** of its services:
> - The RTO's training and assessment practices are relevant to the needs of industry and informed by industry engagement.
> - The RTO implements a range of strategies for industry engagement and systematically uses the outcome of that industry engagement to ensure the industry relevance of:
>   a) its training and assessment strategies, practices and resources; and
>   b) the current industry skills of its trainers and assessors.

You should ensure that your programmes do not perpetuate unhelpful stereotypes or biased perspectives and that they are inclusive. For example, pictures, case studies and examples used in the assessment programmes should reflect a cross-section of communities and should particularly include those with vulnerabilities who may often be less visible. Assessment materials should incorporate views from a wide range of cultural settings and reflect a gender, age and diversity sensitivity.

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[1] CEDEFOP (2015), European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning.

Specific Guidance Relating to Each Key Action

Key Action 2.1 Based on the competency frameworks you have selected, define measurable assessment objectives[2] in terms of the knowledge, skills or full competencies that candidates will be able to demonstrate through the assessment

Quality measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. Use of the selected competency framework. 2. List for each candidate to show measurable knowledge, skills or competencies for assessment.	1. Assessment policy (including distance or online candidates when appropriate). 2. Pre-assessment records that show objectives of assessment. 3. Programme definition that lists knowledge, skills and competencies from the framework that will be assessed. 4. Process to define measurable assessment objectives for candidates. 5. Selected or created competency framework. 6. Nominated role for defining assessment objectives for candidates.

Information gathered in the analysis stage should be used to define which competencies the assessment programme will address. The assessment objectives should take into account candidates' needs (for example the recognition, validation and certification of prior learning and competencies a candidate has achieved, or the evaluation of staff' competencies for a possible promotion) and the needs of the sector.

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[2] In order to distinguish the '**overall objective of the assessment**' discussed in Standard 1: Design, from the present one, we will use here the term '**assessment purpose**'. It refers to the result meant for the assessment (full, partial or no validation of achievement of competencies assessed), while 'overall objective for the assessment' mentioned in Standard 1 and Key action 1.1 refers to the reason why a candidate or a client organization requests an assessment.

Assessment objectives are important for a number of reasons: they are a mechanism for ensuring the assessment process will meet the candidate and client organisations' needs; they facilitate the measurement of candidate's progress, and they are a mechanism for ensuring consistency in the delivery of assessments.

Assessments purposes can vary: from measuring the level of achievement on certain competencies (like a photograph, or a baseline), to measuring progress on certain competencies in comparison with previous assessments. The purpose could be to measure an entire competency domain, like "Understanding humanitarian contexts, and applying humanitarian principles and standards"[3], or to measure specific skills and behaviours linked to a core competency in that domain, for example the capacity to participate actively in disaster coordination and interagency operation based on a clear understanding of the organisation's perspective and approach"[4].

A useful tool to define and agree with the candidate the assessment purposes is the "**Assessment Agreement**".[5] An agreement between the candidate, *the* client organisation (if pertinent) and you which indicates the candidates or client organisation's overall objective for the assessment, the purpose of the specific assessment to be undertaken, the areas of competence candidates will be assessed against, the criteria for evaluation, the process and consequences of the assessment. *See the Further resources and information section for a template designed by the Australian National Training Authority*.

You should note that this Key Action is strictly linked to Key Action 1.2 "List the specific area(s) of competence candidates are to be assessed against."

On the basis on the assessment purpose, the assessment process and tools will be designed.

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[3] Core Humanitarian Competency Framework

[4] Ibid.

[5] Tool adapted from the Training Package Assessment Material Project, Guide 1.

Key Action 2.2 Have clearly defined criteria for candidates to be assessed against from the selected competency frameworks

Quality measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. A policy for assessing levels of competence. 2. Level descriptors defining behaviours expected for each level of competence. 3. The policy is used.	1. Assessment Criteria and Level Descriptors policy 2. Processes to ensure that the policy is used. 3. Minutes of design meetings. 4. Descriptions of evidence required.

Once the assessment objectives have been written, you will need to select or design **assessment criteria** and level descriptors from the competency frameworks. It is ideal to have a "jury" or a small group of professionals with expertise in assessment of competencies, learning and/or the competency area being assessed to participate in the design of the assessment. *More information on the use of juries and jury selection can be found in the annexes linked to Standard 3 Delivery*.

Assessment criteria normally contain competency areas and a description of the knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours that can be expected of a person who possesses that competency. Many competency frameworks also have **low, medium and high levels of performance**, often described through **behaviours** (see example below).

Example: Nutrition in Emergencies Competency Framework - Criteria for one Competency Area

Competency area	Level 1 Behaviours	Level 2 Behaviours	Level 3 Behaviours
Measuring Malnutrition: Rapid Assessments	Demonstrates ability to participate in rapid assessments of the nutritional situation	Organises teams and ensures adherence to guidelines Conducts rapid assessments in line with guidelines and protocols	Plans, organises, and leads nutritional assessments Provides technical support to teams where needed

Example: UNICEF Competency Framework - Deciding and Initiating Action

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Deciding and Initiating Action Takes responsibility for actions, projects and people; takes initiative and works under own direction; initiates and generates activity and introduces changes into work processes; makes quick, clear decisions which may include tough choices or considered risks.	Makes straightforward decisions to progress own work.	Identifies urgent decisions which may involve difficult choices and risks for team or department; Acts upon them promptly, on the basis of incomplete information when necessary.	Identifies urgent decisions which may involve tough choices and major risks for UNICEF as a whole; Acts upon them promptly, on the basis of incomplete or contradictory information when necessary.
	Accepts responsibility for own work and mistakes.	Stands by the actions of team or department, publicly accepting responsibility and accountability.	Stands by the decisions and actions of UNICEF as a whole, accepting and promoting managerial responsibility.
	Works well with minimal direct supervision.	Expresses confidence in own decisions and actions; Seizes the initiative, and guides own work and work of others.	Confidently promotes own decisions and planned actions; Actively encourages others at all levels to take the initiative in the service of organizational goals.
	Takes the initiative with respect to own work.	Actively promotes team initiative with respect to work processes and organizational objectives.	Actively promotes individual and team initiative across UNICEF.

Ideally, you should have a policy or system in place to ensure that candidates are marked using pre-determined criteria. The designers need to be clear on the competency areas and the levels to be assessed. For transparency, these need to be communicated as well to the candidate.

The evidence required to demonstrate competence on any specific area should also be described. This will favour the consistency and reliability of assessments. Evidence can be collected from the candidate (for example through portfolios) or during the assessment itself, observing behaviours or gathering information from answers to questions. Quality evidence is considered evidence that is valid (related to the competency), sufficient (demonstrates a range of performance), current (shows the candidate's current knowledge, skills etc.) and authentic (demonstrates the candidate's own work). Ideally, evidence requirements will be included in assessment tools. *For more details see KA 2.5 on assessment tools.*

The **scoring system** for assessment should also be clearly defined to ensure that candidates are marked consistently and accurately against the competency frameworks that is being used. *For more information see KA 3.2*

Candidates may be marked simply through a pass/fail distinction or through more descriptive levels of performance such as Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor. *See the Further resources and information section for more information about "level descriptors".*

Also, criteria may be used to design a grid for the jury to use. Usually this grid contains some examples which may guide the jury on what to be looking for during the assessment. Some providers may use a grading system while other may use a pass/fail system. *See the Further resources and information section for one example of scoring grid used by the Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative (HQAI)".*

Scoring can also correspond to an assessment done against a pre-identified credential or a level of certification; here we are trying to describe a scoring system that can be used in a competency-based assessment.

Key Action 2.3 Choose and plan the steps for a consistent, inclusive and impartial assessment process

Quality measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. Roles and responsibilities allocated and defined. 2. A stepped plan that shows consistent, inclusive and impartial assessment. 3. The plan is communicated. 4. The plan is used.	1. Organisation charts. 2. Flow chart of processes. 3. A hard or soft copy of an assessment plan. 4. Reference to any previous assessments to ensure consistency. 5. Profile of cohort to show consistency, inclusivity and impartiality. 6. Plan to include consistency e.g. cross marking; observation; standardisation exercises or other means to ensure impartiality and consistency of assessment. 7. Evidence that the plan is used. 8. Feedback from candidates. 9. Records of standardisation meetings with staff.

Assessment process

The **assessment process** is the series of steps that candidates undertake from the beginning to the end; it must suit the needs of all stakeholders and be both efficient and cost-effective. Often, it is expressed as a flow chart.

You can offer a standard assessment process, or a customized one if required by the circumstances and if you have resources available to do so. Assessment processes should be adaptable to take into consideration the varying needs and characteristics of potential candidates in the context, such as literacy levels, language, and disability, for instance.

The assessment process will vary depending on the context, your circumstances and characteristics, type of assessment and other factors, but it should always include the following elements:

1. (pre-application) **Contact** - Candidates seek information on assessments and you gives guidance and information and responds to queries. *See also Standard 6 - Communication*
2. **Application** - Candidates prepare and submit their application according to instructions
3. **Application Review** - You review applications and on the basis of eligibility criteria determine if the application is accepted, reviewed or should be resubmitted (for example with additional information and evidence).
4. **Definition of assessment objective/purpose** - Once candidates are admitted to the assessment process, you and the candidate determine together the overall assessment objective (the reason for taking the assessment) and the assessment purpose (what the specific assessment is about).
5. **Definition of assessment criteria** - On the basis of its assessment policy, you determine the competencies to be assessed, their level, the criteria for evaluation, and the descriptors. This information is communicated to the candidate.
6. **Elaboration of the assessment format and tools** - You determine what are the most appropriate modalities and tools to assess selected competencies; if required new / adapted assessment tools are designed. New tools should be tested and validated before being applied to candidates in a formal assessment.
7. **Assessment plan** – You produce an assessment plan on the basis of your assessment policy and standard processes, adapted to the needs and characteristics of the candidate; the Assessment Plan is shared with the candidate
8. **Preparation of the assessment** - Both the candidate and you prepare for the assessment. This step will vary depending on the assessment plan; for example it might include for the candidate the preparation of a portfolio and collection of evidence regarding his/her skills. You will conduct all practical and administrative preparation needed for the delivery of the assessment and the interpretation of its results. This includes the preparation of the assessors, for example familiarizing themselves with the candidates profile and which competencies will be assessed, reviewing assessment criteria and performance descriptors, assessment tools and techniques.
9. **Delivery of the assessment** - the assessment might take place in a single phase or in multiple, progressive steps. This will depend on the individual case.
10. **Interpretation of results** - During and after the assessment, the assessor(s) analyse the result of the assessment exercises or parts (for example written test, simulation, interview with a jury). Assessors will evaluate and score performance on the basis of the assessment criteria previously established (see point 5).
11. **Validation** - The assessors will compare the assessment results with the accepted standards needed to confirm that the candidate has achieved the level of competence required. If the candidate has not achieved the performance desired, the results of the assessment could be of partial validation or no validation.

12. **Assessment report** - You elaborate the assessment report, giving indications on the candidates performance in each of the competencies and sub-level assessed, and including recommendations for competency development if pertinent.

13. **Communication of the assessment results** – you communicates the results of the assessment (and if pertinent of the certification) to the candidate. You should also communicate its appeal procedures, in case the candidate is not satisfied with the assessment process and its results.

14. **Optional Credentials**- If accredited, you can issue a formal credential, such as a degree, diploma, or certificate. Alternatively, less formal certificates or certifications may also be awarded. Paper credentials, formal or informal, may be supplemented or even replaced by digital credentials if you use the HPass Open Badge Credentialing platform. There are several potential benefits from doing this; *more information about HPass Open Badges can be found on hpass.org*

15. **Recording** - you should document and record all steps of the assessment and its results and maintain the records according to the national legislation.

If an appeal is initiated, the process will continue to include the steps related to the appeal procedures. *See Key Actions 4.3 and 6.2 on appeals.*

You should have in place a clear protocol that can be activated if unfair treatment is detected. This protocol can be activated by different people: the candidate; an impartial observer; one of the jury members; the client organisation.

When designing the process for the assessment, important considerations are:

● **Consistency** – You should ensure that your assessment processes are consistently measuring candidates by defining accepted standards, policies and procedures related to assessing candidates (i.e. Scoring system with Level Descriptors, as discussed in KA2.1). Robust information management systems to record, track and monitor how competencies are assessed are needed to ensure that you are consistently measuring competencies.[6] Standardisation exercises will also be helpful to ensure consistency of assessments.

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[6] A useful approach to ensuring consistency is described in TPAMP Guide 8 - Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessments. More details are provided in the Further resources section at the end of this chapter.

- **Inclusivity and accessibility** - Reasonable measures should be taken to ensure that assessment services are available and accessible for a wide range of humanitarian actors. For example, the design of the assessment should not exclude candidates because they have a lack of resources to use a particular modality. Assessment criteria should ensure that the assessment process does not exclude those without formal education unless it is a specific requirement of the competency (i.e. medical degree).

- **Impartiality** - The design of the assessment process should ensure that no particular social, religious or ethnic groups are favoured. Also males and females should have equal access to participate in assessments and you must proactively engage candidates to find out about any special circumstances that may affect their participation in the assessment (i.e. physical disability). Assessment processes should be designed irrespective how the candidate acquired the competence (formal education, empiric learning and vocational training). You would not judge how the candidate acquire the competence.

See Annex 8 for an example of useful checklist to verify the assessment process (in particular validity, reliability, flexibility and fairness).

Assessment plan

The **assessment plan** is a document developed by an assessor that includes the steps to be followed for individual candidates: the competencies to be assessed, when the assessment will occur, how the assessment will occur, the assessment methods to be used and an overview of instructions for the candidate(s). It is always related to the individual case, and it should be communicated to all involved stakeholders.

The assessment plan should include:
- The competencies to be assessed and criteria for evaluation
- A brief description of how the assessment will be carried out
- Clear instructions for candidates for any task required before, during and after the assessment.
- An overall estimated time for the assessment process and a schedule of activities. The schedule should make clear to the candidate/client organisation all deadlines and the times and places of assessment events.
- The modalities of the assessment including:
  - A description of each assessment modality and respective tools and how they relate to the assessment criteria

- Estimated time required to complete each modality. (ex: Portfolio 25 hours, Professional Situation Exercise: 8 hours, Interview with Jury: 1 hour)
    - Weighting of each modality (ex: Portfolio 25%, Professional Situation Exercise 25%, and Interview with Jury 50%)
- Roles and responsibilities of candidates, client organisations and the assessment provider for the duration of the assessment process. Some organizations may have internal flow charts to visualize who does what and documents with procedures in detail.

Annex 9 – Assessment plan template

Key Action 2.4. Define the expected outcomes of each step of the assessment process

Quality measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. The expected outcomes of each step of the assessment process are defined.	1. The assessment plan has expected outcomes listed at each stage. 2. Communications with candidates. 3. Process to define the outcomes of each step of assessment.

Every step of the assessment process needs to be designed in advance in terms of:
● Documents
● Decisions
● Outcomes
● Next steps

For each step and modality used, the assessor(s) and the candidate should be clear on the expected outcomes and how the outcomes will impact the overall achievement of the results. The expected outcomes should be documented clearly and information shared with candidates prior to the delivery of the assessment. Candidates should receive feedback on their performance for each step as part of the results report.

The table below gives indications for each of the assessment process steps described in KA 2.3, of the documents, decisions, outcomes and next steps. You may need to adapt this guidance; ideally this would be reflected in your Assessment Policy.

Step	Expected outcomes
Contact	**Documents**: n/a. Information can be requested and provided through different modalities including interviews, websites and other forms or channels of communication **Decisions**: Candidates decides to apply or not for assessment with the Assessment Provider. **Outcomes**: The candidate understands the services offered by the Assessment Provider and can take an informed decision on applying for assessments.

	Next steps: Candidate may choose to submit an application for assessment.
Application	**Documents**: Application document, List of eligibility criteria, Instructions on applications **Decisions**: n/a **Outcomes**: The candidate submits an application for assessment to the AP **Next steps**: Application Review
Application Review	**Documents**: Informed decision on the application; formal communication of the decision to the candidate with instruction for further steps, if any. **Decisions**: Acceptance (full or partial) or rejection of the application **Outcomes**: Acceptance (full or partial) or rejection of the application **Next steps**: If the application is accepted, the assessment process starts, if it is partially accepted, the candidate is asked to submit a second, more extensive application, if it is rejected, the process ends.
Assessment objective/purpose	**Documents**: (suggested) Assessment agreement - *See KA 2.1* **Decisions**: Depending on the individual case. AP and candidate agree on the purpose of the assessment, for example measuring the achievement of a certain level in a determined competency or group of competencies. **Outcomes**: Agreed assessment objective/purpose between the candidate and the AP.**Next steps**: Elaboration of assessment criteria
Assessment criteria	**Documents**: Assessment policy, competency framework(s), level descriptors defining behaviours expected for each level of competence. **Decisions**: What competency framework to use **Outcomes**: The assessment criteria, levels of performance and descriptors are defined and recorded **Next steps**: Elaboration of the assessment format and tools
Assessment format and tools	**Documents**: AP assessment guidelines, if existing; other assessment documentation such as: manuals and guidelines; assessment tools, templates and formats; assessment-related materials including questions, activities, procedures, instructions. A list of the assessment modalities and tools to be used. **Decisions**: Which assessment modalities and tools will be used. **Outcomes**: The most adequate assessment modalities and tools are identified to assess the candidate's competencies; if needed new or adapted tools are created

	Next steps: Production of the assessment plan
Assessment plan	**Documents**: Assessment plan **Decisions**: n/a **Outcomes**: A clear assessment plan is produced and communicated to the candidate, outlining all steps of the process and actions required. **Next steps**: Preparation
Preparation of the assessment	**Documents**: It varies depending on the individual case. For example, the candidate might have to collect evidence on his/her previous training, experience and skills, or might have to produce a portfolio or an essay for review. The AP and in particular the assessors might have to elaborate specific exercises or questions; this phase involves also logistics arrangements for the assessments. **Decisions**: It varies depending on the individual case **Outcomes**: Candidate and AP conduct all the activities and tasks required in preparation for the assessment. **Next steps**: Delivery of the assessment in one or multiple phases.
Delivery	**Documents**: Applied assessment tools (candidates responses), recording of assessment and notes by assessor(s), videos, registrations, completed checklists etc. **Decisions**: Observation, analysis, interpretation and recording of results by the assessor(s) during the event (depending on the type of assessment tool used). **Outcomes**: A clear, standardised and impartial assessment takes place. **Next steps**: Interpretation of results post-assessment.
Interpretation of results	**Documents**: Assessor(s) analysis of the results of each assessment tool or exercise, interpretation of the results overall evaluation of the candidate's performance **Decisions**: On the basis of the assessment policy and assessment criteria (see above), assessor(s) perform a judgement on the candidate's achievement of the expected level of performance against each competency. **Outcomes**: The assessor(s) interpret the results of the assessment in an ethical, evidence-based, standardised, impartial manner. *See KA 3.2* **Next steps**: Validation of competency
Validation	**Documents**: Competency framework(s), performance descriptors

	Decisions: If the candidates performance corresponds to the descriptors / accepted standards for performance, his/her competency is validated **Outcomes**: The candidates performance is compared to the assessment criteria to determine achievement (or level of achievement if relevant). **Next steps**: Production of the assessment report
Assessment report	**Documents**: Assessment report **Decisions**: n/a **Outcomes**: A written assessment report is produced to describe the candidate's performance, and the assessment results. If areas for improvement are identified, either because of partial or no achievement on a competency, the assessment report should also give some orientation to the candidate on how to further develop the competency. **Next steps**: Communication of assessment results to the candidate, and if the assessment was requested by a client organisation, to the client organisation as well. If the AP is accredited, certification
Communication of results	**Documents**: Assessment report **Decisions**: n/a **Outcomes**: The candidate is informed of the results of his/her assessment **Next steps**: Recording
(Optional) Certification	**Documents**: It varies depending on the certification. It could be a degree, a diploma, a certificate, a badge, etc. **Decisions**: If the candidate has achieved the required performance level, the candidate is certified. **Outcomes**: The candidate is certified on the competencies assessed. **Next steps**: Recording
Recording	**Documents**: Secured database **Decisions**: n/a. **Outcomes**: The participation and results of the candidate in the assessment are recorded and documented and can be accessed by relevant parties. **Next steps**: Assessment results are kept secured if ever the candidate ask for them in the future.

Key Action 2.5 Choose or create appropriate assessment tools for each step of the process

Quality measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. Documented details are available for the assessment tools that are selected or created for each step of the assessment process. 2. Assessment tools directly measure the achievement of the assessment objectives. 3. Assessment system is controlled.	1. The assessment plan. 2. List of assessment tools mapped to the plan. 3. Process to create new assessment tools when gaps have been noted. 4. Named role identified to create / sign off new assessment tools. 5. Sign off process for new assessment tools. 6. Process to check and select whether existing appropriate assessment tools. 7. Assessment tools have clear procedures and instructions. 8. Sign off documents.

At the design stage, you should develop tools that measure directly the achievement of the assessment objectives. The modalities and tools selected or designed should ensure that candidates have opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours so they can be effectively measured.

In order for an assessment to achieve its objective of accurately measuring competencies, candidates need to be assessed in a fair and consistent way, meaning that an assessment is always done using the same criteria and procedures. This is guaranteed by having an assessment system in place. *For more information on assessment systems please refer to Standard 4 - Evaluation and accountability.*

Assessment modality (often referred to also as assessment method) refers to the model used to conduct assessments e.g. online tests, simulation exercises, portfolios, oral exams, written tests and so on. *See KA 1.6 for further details on assessment modalities.*

An **assessment tool** instead contains both the instrument and the instructions for collecting and interpreting evidence:
- The instrument(s) are the questions or activities (developed on the basis of the assessment modality chosen) for the specific assessment.

- The procedures include information and instructions given to the candidate for the completion of the assessment and to the assessor on the assessment will be conducted and recorded.

For example, an assessment modality is "simulation", while a corresponding assessment tool is a "desktop emergency simulation on floods in Bangladesh", designed to assess the candidates' competence in coordination".

Where possible, it is ideal to use assessment modalities and tools that are widely accepted for the humanitarian sector whether by the government or a global or regional authority. Candidates will benefit most from assessment results that are recognised by a wide range of employers. You, client organisations and candidates within a country or region will benefit from aligning to accepted methods of assessment.

It is very important that assessment modalities are chosen and tools are selected or designed in a way that best addresses the competency or its components, for example to assess behaviours a simulation would be more useful than a written test. Assessment modalities and tools should also be selected or designed to maximize candidates' performance, or at least to not disadvantage them.

When selecting or developing standardised assessment tools and procedures, guidance on how to apply these to people with specific learning needs, who might otherwise be disadvantaged, need to be included and applied consistently. This is because standardised assessment tools and procedures might disadvantage or exclude some candidates due to their specific needs or abilities, and you should make reasonable adjustments so that candidates can complete assessments, in a way that does not unfairly affect their performance. For example a written test may be difficult for a candidate with dyslexia to complete within the allotted time. In this case, you could discuss with the candidate what adjustments could be made to enable them to complete the assessment. These adjustments might include additional time to complete the written test, or conducting the test orally. See Annex 10 to know more about the characteristics of an ideal assessment tool.

To select the most adequate assessment modalities and tools, you should take into consideration multiple elements: what competency will be assessed and what aspect of the competency (knowledge, skills, attitudes or behaviours; some of them or all of them; at what level of performance); the type of evidence to be collected; the context; the characteristics of the

candidate; if the tool is valid, reliable, flexible and fair.[7] Well-designed assessment tools should provide evidence[8] of the candidate's competency that is:

- valid – there is a clear relationship between the evidence requirements of the competency and the evidence on which the assessment judgement is made;
- sufficient – the performance criteria and evidence guide are addressed; competence over a period of time is demonstrated; all dimensions of competency are addressed; competence in different contexts is demonstrated;
- current – the evidence demonstrates the candidate's current knowledge and skills; and
- authentic – it can be verified that the evidence is the candidate's own work.

To create a new assessment tool, four main steps are necessary:

1. **Clarifying the focus of the assessment tool and the evidence requirements** - Based on the assessment objectives, related criteria and competency frameworks, you identify the evidence requirements, or the information that shows that the candidate is competent. A useful reference will be the levels/performance descriptors *(See for reference KA 2.2)*
2. **Choose the most adequate assessment modality** - You identify which modality is the most adequate to test the competency and also to meet the candidate's needs. This phase is particularly important to ensure that candidates are not disadvantaged. For example, a candidate might be very skilled in coordination of activities, but might find it difficult to express it in writing due to a low level of literacy in written English. Another candidate from a different cultural background might find difficult to be questioned by an assessor of the opposite sex. In this phase, you should reflect on how the assessment will be conducted, who will administer it, where and when, what are the candidates' needs and abilities.
3. **Design and develop the assessment tool** - Once the modality is chosen, you will design a new tool, respecting the same criteria highlighted above on the selection of tools: the evidence collected through the tool must be valid, sufficient, current and authentic. Tools differ and therefore their design will be different. For example, if the modality chosen is direct observation, a tool could be an observation checklist that includes all relevant aspects to be observed. If the modality is the simulation, the tool might include a scenario, instructions for the assessors, instructions for the candidates, inputs for the progression

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[7] Principles of assessment such as validity, reliability, flexibility and fairness are explained under Tools and Templates.

[8] Definitions adapted from "Designing assessment tools for quality outcomes in VET"

of the simulation, a checklist for the assessor on what to evaluate. Tools can also be developed using existing resources, for example a competency-based interview can be developed using the question bank including in the CHCF Guide.

4. **Testing, review and sign-off** - Once the new tools have been developed, they should be tested and reviewed before being used in formal assessments. Testing can be done piloting the tools with volunteers, and getting feedback both from volunteer candidates and assessors; the review can be done by experts in the sector/industry that will provide feedback and suggested improvement on the tools. You will gather all feedback and refine the tool.

See Annex 11 for a more articulated process to create new assessment tools.

The competency framework can also be useful to select or design some of the assessment tools; for instance the portfolio the candidate will present as part of the eligibility dossier. The competency framework is also a good source for designing self-assessment tools. You could offer to the candidate the list of the competencies with some questions and a grading system, so she can assess how she could perform against the defined competencies.

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Annexes (Tools and templates)

Relevant Key Action	Tool/Template	Annex number
2.3	Adapted checklist to verify the assessment process	Annex 8
2.3	Assessment plan template	Annex 9
2.5	Characteristics of an ideal assessment tool	Annex 10
2.5	Creating new tools	Annex 11

Annex 8- Assessment process checklist

This checklist helps in verifying validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility of the assessment. Validity must have the highest priority when you make your choice of approach. Reaching a sensible balance between all of the principles is the key. Gauge your assessment against the following statements, and where you are unable to answer YES, re-work your approach.

The first checklist (on validity) is taken from Australian National Training Authority (2002), "Maximising confidence in assessment decision-making". More checklists are available in the document. https://www.ncver.edu.au/__data/assets/file/0015/10086/maximising-confidence-in-assessment-780.pdf (Last access 19 January 2018)

Question	Y/N	Comment
The assessment tasks are based on realistic workplace activities and contexts.		
The evidence relates directly to the units of competence, or learning outcomes, being assessed.		
The instrument will assess the candidate's ability to meet the level of performance required by the unit(s) of competency.		
The assessment tasks have been designed to allow holistic and integrated assessment of knowledge, skills and attitudes.		
More than one task and source of evidence will be used as the basis for		

judgement, with evidence drawn from a variety of performances over time where practical.		
Different sources of evidence of knowledge and skills that underpin the competency will be considered in the assessment.		
The purpose, boundaries and limitations of the interpretations that can be made of evidence have been clearly identified.		
The methods and instruments selected are appropriate for the assessment system specified by the industry (where applicable).		
Where practical, the methods and processes for assessment have been validated by another person with expertise in the competencies being assessed.		

Annex 9 - Assessment Plan Template

A template to be used by the assessor to determine the assessment plan.

Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (2001), Training Package Assessment Materials Project - Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment

http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/456376/Guide-10.pdf (last access 8 February 2018)

Assessment plan

Assessment task:

Assessment method:

Assessor/s:

Date of assessment:

Units of competency/elements to be assessed:

Brief description of task:

Resources required:

Instructions for candidates:

Annex 10 - Ideal characteristics of an assessment tool

The table below describing all components of an ideal assessment tool, is taken from Australia National Quality Council, "Guide for developing assessment tools", 2009. http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/801619/Validation-And-ModerationGuideForDevelopingAssessmentTools.pdf (Last access 19 January 2018)

Component	Description
The context	The target group and purpose of the tool should be described. This should include a description of the background characteristics of the target group that may impact on the candidate performance (e.g. literacy and numeracy requirements, workplace experience, age, gender etc).
Competency mapping	The components of the Unit(s) of Competency that the tool should cover should be Mapping described. This could be as simple as a mapping exercise between the components of the task (e.g. each structured interview question) and components within a Unit or cluster of Units of Competency. The mapping will help to determine the sufficiency of the evidence to be collected.
The information to be provided to the candidate	Outlines the task(s) to be provided to the candidate that will provide the opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate the competency. It should prompt them to say, do, write or create something.
The evidence to be collected from the candidate	Provides information on the evidence to be produced by the candidate in response to the task.
Decision making rules	The rules to be used to: Check evidence quality (i.e. the rules of evidence); Judge how well the candidate performed according to the standard expected (i.e. the evidence criteria); and Synthesise evidence from multiple sources to make an overall judgement.
Range and conditions	Outlines any restriction or specific conditions for the assessment such as the location, time restrictions, assessor qualifications, currency of evidence (e.g. for portfolio based assessments), amount of supervision required to perform the task (i.e. which may assist with determining the authenticity of evidence) etc.
Materials/resources required	Describes access to materials, equipment etc that may be required to perform the task.
Assessor	Defines the amount (if any) of support provided.

interventions	
Reasonable adjustment (for enhancing fairness and flexibility)	This section should describe the guidelines for making reasonable adjustments to the way in which evidence of performance is gathered (e.g. in terms of the information to be provided to the candidate and the type of evidence to be collected from the candidate) without altering the expected performance standards (as outlined in the decision making rules).
Validity evidence	Evidence of validity (such as face, construct, predictive, concurrent, consequential and content) should be provided to support the use of the assessment evidence for the defined purpose and target group of the tool.
Reliability evidence	If using a performance based task that requires professional judgement of the assessor, evidence of reliability could include providing evidence of: The level of agreement between two different assessors who have assessed the same evidence of performance for a particular candidate (i.e. inter-rater reliability); and The level of agreement of the same assessor who has assessed the same evidence of performance of the candidate, but at a different time (i.e. intra-rater reliability). If using objective test items (e.g. multiple choice tests) than other forms of reliability should be considered such as the internal consistency of a test (i.e. internal reliability) as well as the equivalence of two alternative assessment tasks (i.e. parallel forms).
Recording requirements	The type of information that needs to be recorded and how it is to be recorded and stored, including duration.
Reporting requirements	For each key stakeholder, the reporting requirements should be specified and linked to the purpose of the assessment.

Annex 11 - Procedure to design and develop assessment tools

Australian Government, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace relations (2012), TAEASS502B Design and develop assessment tools
https://training.gov.au/TrainingComponentFiles/TAE10/TAEASS502B_R1.pdf (last access 19 January 2018)

1. Determine focus of the assessment tool	1.1 Identify target group of candidates, purposes of *assessment tool,* and *contexts* in which the tool will be used 1.2 Access relevant *benchmarks for assessment* and interpret them to establish evidence required to demonstrate competence 1.3 Identify, access and interpret *organisational, legal and ethical requirements* and relevant *contextualisation guidelines*

	1.4 Identify other *related documentation* to inform assessment tool development
2. Design assessment tool	2.1 Select assessment methods that support the collection of defined evidence, taking into account the context in which the assessment will take place and meeting the principles of assessment 2.2 Enable candidates to show or support their claim for recognition of current competency through selected assessment methods 2.3 Consider different *assessment instruments* for the selected assessment methods to generate options for collection of evidence 2.4 Consider how the assessment instruments will be administered
3. Develop assessment tool	3.1 Develop specific assessment instruments that address the evidence to be collected 3.2 Define and document clear and specific *procedures* instructing assessor and candidate on the administration and use of the instruments 3.3 Consider requirements of *assessment system policies and procedures* and address storage and retrieval needs, and review, evaluation and version control procedures as part of this process
4. Review and trial assessment tool	4.1 Check draft assessment tools against *evaluation criteria* and amend as required 4.2 Trial assessment tools to validate content and applicability 4.3 Collect and document feedback from relevant people involved in trialling 4.4 Make amendments to final tool based on analysis of feedback 4.5 Appropriately format and file finalised assessment tool according to assessment system policies and procedures and organisational, legal and ethical requirements

Further resources and information related to Standard 2: Design

Australian Government (2015), Guide to developing assessment tools https://www.asqa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net2166/f/Guide_to_developing_assessment_tools.pdf (last access 8 February 2018)

Australian Government (no date), Fact-sheet "Providing quality training and assessment services to students with disabilities"
https://www.asqa.gov.au/news-publications/publications/fact-sheets/providing-quality-training-and-assessment-services-students (last access 8 February 2018)

Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (2012), Assessing the Skills and Competencies of Internationally Trained Immigrants: A Manual for Regulatory Bodies, Employers and Other Stakeholders
http://capla.ca/assessing-the-skills-and-competencies-of-internationally-trained-immigrants-a-manual-for-regulatory-bodies-employers-and-other-stakeholders-2/ (last access 8 February 2018)
This document provides an overview of common assessment modalities or methods (self-assessments, written examinations, oral questioning, demonstrations and observations, and portfolios), their purpose, benefits and challenges.

Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (2015), Quality Assurance for RPL in Canada - The Manual
http://capla.ca/rpl-qa-manual/ (last access 8 February 2018)
Note: this is an amazing resource but not free.

CEDEFOP (2015), European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning
http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3073 (last access 8 February 2018)

CHS Alliance (2017), A guide to the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework
https://www.chsalliance.org/what-we-do/chcf/guide (last access 8 February 2018)
A list of broad and specific questions against the six domain competencies of the CHCF.

Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (2001), Training Package Assessment Materials *Project - Guide 1: Training Package assessment materials kit*
http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/456351/Guide-1.pdf (last access 6 March 2018)
– Template 8 page 182: Assessment Agreement
Project - Guide 8: Strategies for ensuring consistency in assessment
http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/456374/Guide-8.pdf (last access 8 February 2018)
See the 5P model on ensuring consistency in assessments, (people, process, products, perspective, and policy). People includes assessors, managers and other staff associated with the

assessment process; the process describes the planning, conduct and review of assessment; the products are the items used in planning, conducting and reviewing assessments; the perspective ensures that the assessment service addresses the requirements and expectations of industry, employers and candidates, the policy is the stated intention about how the assessment process will be managed and implemented.

Project - Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment
An Assessment Planning Checklist organised in 5 sections to verify all steps of the planning process and ensure its completeness.
http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/456376/Guide-10.pdf (last access 8 February 2018)

Department of Training and Workforce Development, Western Australia (2013), Designing assessment tools for quality outcomes in VET
https://www.velgtraining.com/knowledge/download/b385d703-d87d-40eb-b13f-707a859bc888 (last access 8 February 2018)
Provides useful definition of assessment principles.

England, Wales and Northern Ireland National Qualifications Framework (2011), Accredited qualifications
Information about **level descriptors** can be found in:
The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) system offers you an explanation about level descriptors: http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/level-descriptors.html and a format: http://www.scqf.org.uk/content/files/Level_Descriptors-original_format.doc

France Ministry of Employment (no date), La mise en situation professionnelle en pratique (Professional Situation Test in practice) http://www.vae.gouv.fr/espace-ressources/fiches-outil/la-mise-en-situation.html (last access 8 February 2018)
This page (in French) explains what a Professional Situation Test is and provides two examples on how it can be conducted, one from the employment sector and one from the education sector.

Government of Western Australia (2013), Designing assessment tools for quality outcomes in VET
https://www.velgtraining.com%2Fknowledge%2Fdownload%2Fb385d703-d87d-40eb-b13f-707a859bc888&usg=AOvVaw3RNumVCGeHiQIVtZLQbO_n (last access 19 January 2018)

Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative (2018), HQAI Self-Assessment Manual
A manual for organisations that undertake a self-assessment against the CHS
http://hqai.org/wp-content/uploads/GUI125-HQAI-self-assessment-Manual-2018-02-01.pdf (last access 8 February 2018)
An example of scoring grid (although for organisations and not individuals) – page 12

Standard 3 - Delivery

Assessments are delivered effectively and accurately

Why is this standard important?

Effective delivery (implementation and facilitation) of assessment programmes is essential for candidates and client organisations to achieve their assessment goals. This stage of the assessment process is of special importance for candidates. Here the provider has the opportunity to demonstrate the high quality processes employed during the analysis and design stages.

Effectively delivering programmes requires ensuring that programmes are implemented as planned in adherence to agreed parameters while at the same time making appropriate adaptations for the candidates and providing sufficient personalised support to individuals to ensure their needs are met.

Overall Guidance

Delivery of programmes relates to ensuring that an assessment programme is implemented as planned, according to agreed schedule and covering the agreed content, and ensuring that the candidate's journey is effectively supported so that they are able to achieve the assessment objective.

To implement an assessment programme effectively, you should ensure that the assessment environment (the physical or virtual space in which the assessment takes place) and resources are sufficient, accessible and adapted to target client organisations and candidates and they must allow for support to candidates prior to, during and after the assessment.

Good Practice

Safe environment - Bioforce

Once they are eligible, candidates have an "accompagnement" (support) in the format of 3- free hours' collective skype.

If they want private sessions: They have to pay BIOFORCE for this service.

BIOFORCE created and nurtures a pool of "accompagnateurs" (tutors) inside the organisation or identifying external coaches.

BIOFORCE Offers training for this tutors and on-going support with recycling sessions to conduct AAR (After Action Reviews) to inform future practice.

It is the HR who recruits and selects the "accompagnateurs".

For programmes that are facilitated (face-to-face or remotely), the role of the assessor(s) is crucial. The assessors need to have a broad range of competencies, skills and experiences including: interviewing and assessment skills, ability to follow a standardised process and the established criteria for well-delivered services, solid cross-cultural communication skills, understanding of professional standards of practice, report-writing ; strong interpersonal skills and the ability to build rapport with individuals quickly and effectively. In addition they must demonstrate respect for candidates' views, opinions and experiences: for example, by actively eliciting and acknowledging candidates' existing knowledge, skills and experiences.

A code of practice for conducting assessments and interpreting results are needed to ensure effective and accurate assessments. The code establishes rules of engagement (such as trainer cannot also be assessor), defines roles and responsibilities of assessors before, during and after the actual assessment exercise (e.g. during assessment-there should be one external observer, an assessor and a moderator to guarantee a safe environment present). See Annex 12 - A sample code of practice.

You should have quality assurance mechanisms in place to ensure that the assessors are performing effectively: this involves conducting observations, analysing candidate and client organisation feedback and providing feedback to the assessors about their performance. Assessors, and the assessment providers that use them, should ensure that their knowledge and experience is kept up to date. *Further details can be found in the Resources Standard, Key Action 6.3.*

Specific Guidance Relating to Each Key Action

Key Action 3.1 Carry out assessments as designed

Quality measures	Suggested quality indicators
Auditable evidence is available to show that assessments have been conducted as designed.	1. Assessment policy. 2. Observation records. 3. Staff preparation sessions / communications. 4. Communications to and from staff re resources availability. 5. Communications in event of any change required. 6. Feedback from candidates. 7. Feedback from staff. 8. Checklists that confirm what took place. 9. Meetings with assessors / candidates after assessment has taken place. 10. Records that assessment plan has been followed. 11. Process to check both during and after assessment that the design has been followed. 12. Qualified and competent assessment staff.

It is your responsibility to ensure all resources, including staff, physical resources and online assessment platforms are prepared, ready and functional to deliver assessment programmes to relevant candidates as intended. This means that the programmes are implemented at the time and in the manner intended and that they support candidates to achieve the assessment objectives as designed. *Further information on resources can be found in Standard 5.*

In facilitated assessments (where candidates interact with assessors in face to face situations), it is particularly important that the assessor is well-prepared. They must be aware of relevant information about the candidates; they must be up to date with the latest developments relevant to the subject matter; and they must have familiarised themselves with the assessment objectives, requirements, scheduled and planned activities of the programme as laid out in the

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assessment plans. Likewise, administrative staff must display principled behaviour at all times and contribute to a supportive environment for candidates.

It is inevitable that there will sometimes be delays or necessary changes to a planned schedule of activities. These should be communicated to the candidates with as much notice as possible.

Implementing the assessment programme as designed does not preclude making adaptations based on candidate needs. Adaptations to support candidates, such as altering the choice of activities, making adjustments to the timings or providing alternative examples and case studies, should be made in such a way that candidates are still able to achieve the intended assessment objectives.

Key Action 3.2 Make sure the results of assessments are interpreted in a standardised and impartial way, and that they are based on evidence

Quality measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. Auditable evidence is available to show that assessments were; - evidence based - standardised and - impartial.	1. Candidates' evidence is retained for a defined period of time. 2. Evidence is mapped to assessment decisions (e.g. marking; spreadsheet; reports). 3. Process to conduct standardisation exercises. 4. Assessment profiles. 5. Records of assessors' / jury meetings to discuss assessment outcomes. 6. Process for cross marking. 7. Process to benchmark or produce mark schemes. 8. Process of triangulation against other relevant reports or outcomes of other assessments. 9. Process to interpret assessment results. 10. Nominated role with responsibility for assessment.

Standardisation in assessment is about consistency. Consistency refers to the same judgements being made in the same, or similar, contexts each time a particular assessment is conducted. You should document the required processes and ensure that all assessment staff are trained in delivering assessments accordingly.

All new assessors/jury members must be trained in the organization's principles, policies and procedures in relation to delivery of assessments. As part of training, assessors should be made aware of the importance of impartiality in assessments- that is to say the assessment process should not in any way hinder or advantage any individual.

Assessors use the descriptors and criteria during assessment, to determine how well candidates meet the criteria. Descriptors and criteria also serve as a valuable tool to give specific and motivational feedback at the end of an assessment process.

The use of juries is a common approach to ensure impartiality in assessments. Juries are a small representative group of assessors who possess the required abilities to judge candidates against assessment criteria. They will need to collectively have assessor skills and mastery of the subject of the competencies.

Commonly accepted principles of juror behaviour are:
- neutrality towards the candidate,
- the objectivity of the assessment
- respect for confidentiality
- equal treatment
- the solidarity of the jury's decision

Individual assessors and/or Jury members should adhere to strict ethical guidelines that ensure a professional assessment service and fairness to all candidates. You should create an ethical declaration to be signed by assessors and jury members to ensure accountability and fairness. (See Annex 13 with a Sample ethical declaration)

Key Action 3.3 Create a safe environment for the delivery of clear standardised and impartial assessments

Quality measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. Documents that show how a safe environment has been created. 2. Standardised and impartial assessments are conducted. (Cross reference to 3.2 and 3.4).	1. Safety policy. 2. New assessors/jury members training session records. 3. Process of risk assessments. 4. Published guidelines about safety to candidates and staff. 5. Process to check the environment to ensure safety of staff and candidates. 6. Methods and process to foster a culture of trust and openness. 7. Interviews with candidates and staff. 8. Research of the environment's safety. 9. Nominated role with responsibility for safety.

Candidates' should feel that they are supported to reach their potential throughout the delivery of assessments through their treatment by the assessment staff members (assessors and administrative staff). Establish a climate of trust where both assessors and candidates' are confident in their roles and realise the value of following established assessment protocols. Assessment staff should adopt a welcoming attitude towards candidates. Assessment staff should be careful not to not infantilize candidates. They are adult professionals looking for recognition of their professional mastery of competencies.

Some deontological principles the provider may consider are:
- consent of the beneficiary
- respect for professional secrecy
- respect for privacy
- agreement of the beneficiary to communicate the results to a third party
- destruction of documents at the end of the assessment.

Key Action 3.4 Have in place reasonable measures to make sure candidates are safe and secure and that their wellbeing is protected

Quality measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. Reasonable measures have been taken to ensure candidates'; - safety, - security and - wellbeing.	1. Safety policy. 2. Process of risk assessments. 3. List of measures taken to change or adapt conditions to ensure; a) safety, b) security and c) wellbeing 4. Process to check the safety and fitness for purpose of resources and venue availability. 5. Research of national and local political situations and associated risk. 6. Length of assessment appropriate. 7. Interviews with candidates and staff. 8. Process to take action to mitigate risk from national and local political situations. 9. Nominated role with responsibility for candidates' safety, security and wellbeing.

For the duration of the assessment process, particularly if this is delivered face-to-face, you have the responsibility to ensure candidates' safety, security and well-being. Risks can arise from a wide variety of factors such as: activities that are poorly designed, conducted or explained; an assessment environment or venue that is not sufficiently safe in terms of the physical environment and equipment or the structure; a venue that is not in a secure location and that may expose candidates to threats to their person or property; content or activities that may put candidates at risk due to the sensitive nature of the topics and threats may arise to candidates' security or well-being due to topics and ideas that they are asked to share or even due to their attendance. These considerations also apply in on-line assessments, and assessment providers should be conscious of the impact of an assessment process on those who are being assessed remotely.

You can consider the following examples to ensure safety, security and well-being:

- Assessors should not ask candidates to engage in activities that would negatively impact on their safety, security or well-being: activities should be carried out safely with clear instructions, for example, sensitive, political or taboo topics should be broached with caution and candidates should not be required to share ideas or participate in activities which may pose a risk to them;
- The assessment environment and equipment should not pose any risk to the safety of any of the candidates: there should be no trip hazards, electronic equipment should have been tested recently, any furniture to be used by candidates should be sound; in assessments programmes with equipment, such as personal security assessments, all equipment should be tested regularly, and assessors trained in their use;
- The venue should be structurally sound, well secured and located in an area that does not pose a security threat to candidates

In some cases, it may be deemed that additional support should be on hand or close by if something were to go wrong. For example, a first aid kit should be readily available, and assessors should know where to seek medical or first aid help if required. In courses that put candidates learners in stressful situations in order to prepare them for an extreme or hostile environment, assessors should be aware of signs of psychological distress and should be able to remove candidates from a situation before their well-being is compromised. They should also know where to refer candidates for additional support if required. It is important that any stress that candidates experience in this type of assessment is within reasonable limits so that it contributes to the ability to measure competence rather than one which can create distress or trauma.

In general, you might find that candidates will not provide accurate information if they are not treated correctly and safety, security and wellbeing are assured.

Key Action 3.5 Monitor candidates' progress

Quality measures	Suggested quality indicators
Auditable records exist to show that the candidate's participation and performances have been accurately assessed (Cross reference to 2.2 and 3.6).	1. Assessment policy. 2. Registers of attendance at assessments. 3. Candidates' progress reports. 4. Sufficiency of attendance confirmed in documentation. 5. Process to record the outcome of performance in each candidate's assessment record. (Cross referenced to 2.2). 6. Acknowledgment of performance. (Cross reference to 3.6).

Recording candidates' performance means: checking progress against assessment objectives; making clear records that are suitable for sharing and storing for future reference; applying monitoring equally to all candidates; establishing systems for verifying the identity of candidates; establishing systems for ensuring work is completed following agreed guidelines (for example, if there is a closed book assessment, there will a mechanism in place to ensure candidates do not have access to their learning materials during the assessment).

Monitoring of candidates' progress should be participatory with inputs from the assessor and the candidate. The assessor should provide timely, specific feedback to the candidate on their progress. In the case of both facilitated and non-facilitated assessments, candidates should be aware of how they have performed in tasks and should be given feedback on how they could improve in a timely manner.

After the final assessment step has been completed, the assessment results are determined. Assessment results compare the required competencies to a candidate's existing competencies. Candidates' performance in an assessment normally leads to one of the following outcomes:
- **Partial validation** - The jury/assessor(s) identify the skills, competencies and knowledge that have been met and those that will be the subject of an additional assessment necessary for full validation.

- **Full validation -** The jury/assessor(s) recognise that the candidate has the competencies required to be awarded the recognition of achievement. Recognitions may include: a badge, diploma, title, certificate etc.
- **Refusal of validation**: The jury/assessor(s) determine that achievements do not correspond to the level of skills, knowledge and behaviours required.

The results should be validated by an agreed and impartial process.

Key Action 3.6 Deliver assessment reports (and recognised badges and certificates if available)

Quality measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. Records show that accurate assessment results have been delivered to candidates. 2. Auditable records exist to show that where available, recognised badges / certificates have been accurately issued to candidates. 3. Linked to recognition body	1. Quality assurance policy. 2. Accurate, auditable and accessible assessment records (Cross reference to 3.5). 3. Assessment reports. 4. Assessment outcomes are recorded and quality assured by a published process. 5. Communications showing assessment reports delivered to interested parties (e.g. organisations; individuals). 6. Ownership of badges / certificates defined. 7. Process to control the issuing of badges / certificates. 8. Process to ensure the security of badges /certificates. 9. Secure storage facilities.

Each person who participates in assessment should receive an assessment report from you. Assessment reports should provide information that helps candidates identify the level to which they have achieved their assessment goal.

When delivering assessment reports, it is important to select an appropriate communication channel and ensure that any official diplomas, titles or certificates are managed securely. Any channel used should be appropriate in the context and sensitive to the candidate's right to privacy. *See Standard 6 for more information on communicating sensitively.*

Where client organisations have funded candidates' participation in the assessment, assessment results may be delivered directly to the client organisation if this has been previously agreed to. For example, the human resources department of the client organisation may receive a candidate's assessment results and use them to inform a decision about recruitment of the candidate or a promotion within the organisation. Assessment results can also help client organisations to give candidates relevant career development opportunities and advice. The candidates should be informed, from the beginning, of how and to whom assessment reports will be delivered.

When candidates have a successful assessment, the assessment report should contain details about their results and the form of recognition they will receive. Feedback on success helps individuals to decide on their next steps. An assessment report where the candidate has been successful should contain but is not limited to: detailed constructive feedback on both successes and areas where performance could be improved and official assessment recognition which may be in the form of academic credit, license and/or certification.

In the case of a partial or unsuccessful assessment, candidates should be given specific information on the criteria they did not meet. The report should contain an explanation of incomplete evidence and/or learning gaps that need to be addressed to meet the criteria. Candidates can then prepare for re-assessment, whether by self-study, additional training or work assignments, or to choose an alternate path.

Annexes (Tools and templates)

Relevant Key Action	Tool/Template	Annex number
Overall guidance	Sample code of practice	Annex 12
3.2	Sample ethical declaration	Annex 13
3.6	Template assessment report	Annex 14

Annex 12 Sample code of practice

Annex 13 Ethical declaration

(will be adapted from http://www.vae.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/charte_deontologique_jury.pdf)

Annex 14 Template assessment report

Further resources and information related to Standard 3: Delivery

American Psychological Association (2014) "The Standards for educational and Psychological Testing"
 http://www.apa.org/science/programs/testing/standards.aspx

List on available resources on safety and security: https://sites.google.com/site/ngosecurity/safety&securitymanuals

CARE (2004) "CARE International SAFETY & SECURITY HANDBOOK"
https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/care-safety-and-security-handbook.pdf

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Standard 4 – Evaluation and accountability

The quality of assessment services is maintained and improved

Why is this standard important?

Effective evaluation and accountability processes ensure assessment services are responsive to candidates' and client organisations' needs.

Processes that systematically measure the quality of services offered, and feed into a continuous cycle of review and improvement, ensure that the services offered are relevant, appropriate and needs based.

Accountability to candidates is an essential component of quality. You should have mechanisms in place and designated staff for eliciting and responding to feedback from candidates and client organisations and for dealing with complaints.

Good Practice

The importance of quality and accountability in humanitarian action is highlighted by the numerous initiatives that have emerged over the years. Some of them are still active, others have evolved or merged:

- The Sphere Project
- The CHS Alliance and its Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability
- The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) - merged into the CHS Alliance
- People in Aid - merged into the CHS Alliance
- The Active Learning Network for Accountability and performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP)
- The Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative
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The list is not exhaustive as there are many more organisations and initiatives, as well projects, focused on quality and accountability.

Overall Guidance

You should have policies and processes in place to ensure the consistent quality of their services and that this quality is maintained and improved through monitoring and evaluation.

Quality of services is paramount not only in itself but also because of the particular nature of humanitarian action - that you ultimately support through your services - as humanitarians serve vulnerable populations and populations affected by crises. It is imperative that they provide the highest quality of services to people who are already suffering or in distress.

To this effect, monitoring and evaluation are effective tools to improve quality, as they allow you to verify and continuously enhance your offering. You can also engage into quality certification. *The Quality Manual and the self-evaluation tool provide useful guidance on quality assurance.*

To ensure that the quality of assessment services is maintained and improved, you can engage into designing participatory and proportionate monitoring and evaluation systems, through which you will collect feedback and observation on their services. Accessible and transparent feedback mechanisms are also important for the same reason, allowing the exchange of ideas on how to improve. Feedback can also be negative, and you shall be able to deal with concerns and complaints raised about your performance and services. Finally, all positive and negative feedback, reviews, performance analysis and lessons learned shall be put to use as relevant, to drive the continuous improvement of your assessment services.

This chapter covers monitoring and evaluation of assessment services. *See Standard 3 Delivery for further information about monitoring candidate's participation in the assessment.*

Specific Guidance Relating to Each Key Action7

Key Action 4.1 Design and put in place methods of monitoring and evaluating assessment services

Quality Measures	Suggested Quality indicators
1. Monitoring and evaluation policies and procedures are communicated. 2. Monitoring and evaluation takes place.	1. Monitoring and evaluation policies (including period of review of policy). 2. Timetable or schedule of when monitoring and evaluation takes place. 3. Identified role with responsibility for design and performance of monitoring and evaluation. 4. Records and tools to show proportionate monitoring and evaluation has occurred (e.g. questionnaires; surveys; interviews with staff and candidates; records of meetings held at end of assessments). 5. Feedback from candidates, staff and organisations. 6. Conformity to local data protection laws. 7. Monitoring and evaluation process. 8. Meetings with staff and candidates.

Monitoring and evaluation are two powerful tools for managing the quality of assessment services. They are complementary components that form part of a robust quality assurance system, and they each have a different function in supporting quality. The key differences are:

- **Monitoring** is an ongoing process to measure progress towards achieving planned results. Monitoring allows you to check whether services are being delivered as planned, and to identify emerging trends or problems.
- **Evaluation** is done periodically, or at set points in time, for example at the end of service delivery, and it aims to assess the achieved results against expected ones.

Both monitoring and evaluation allow you to gather feedback on different aspects of your assessments services and processes, and this information can be used to check quality, and identify and deliver improvements to services. You should aim to establish systematic, but simple, timely and participatory mechanisms to monitor progress and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of your services.

You should always developed and implemented a **Monitoring and Evaluation Policy**, even in a basic form. Depending on your structure and the extent of your resources and services, the M&E Policy could include the Concerns and Complaints Policy (*see KA 4.3*) or there could be a separate one.

The Policy should highlight at a minimum:
- **Objective**: what is the purpose of M&E for you;
- **Organizational structures/roles with M&E functions**: who is responsible for what and in what role;
- **M&E Framework**: the Policy should call for the elaboration of an M&E framework that will indicate assumptions, process, inputs and outputs;
- **Timeframe**: indicate expected schedule for regular monitoring and periodic evaluations, as well as conditions for extraordinary ones.
- **Use of results**: how the outcome of internal and external monitoring and evaluation exercises are used to improve services
- **Recording and use of data**: indicating what data is collected, how it is recorded and stored, how it is used, all this in relation as well to local data protection law.

You would establish your own monitoring and evaluation process, depending on what is established in the M&E Policy, the services you provide, the resources you have available, and other factors.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation can take many forms, and the level of participation that is appropriate will vary depending on the type of assessment and the context. As a minimum, internal staff members and those who use the assessment services should have an active opportunity to provide feedback. Whereas, for a strongly participatory approach to monitoring and evaluation, staff, candidates and client organisations need to be involved in designing the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and tools, including making decisions about what will be monitored and evaluated. External, independent evaluations should also regularly take place. *Key Action 4.4 elaborates on how the results of monitoring and evaluation are used.*

The time and resources allocated for monitoring and evaluation should be **proportionate** to your size and the scope of your work and the service provided, nevertheless a minimum level should be ensured as it is defined in your Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. Careful consideration should be given to how much time staff, candidates and client organisations are asked to dedicate to monitoring and evaluation activities, as well as to what data is really needed, and how it will be used. As a general rule, you should not collect data that you will not use. Clarity about the intended use and users of the data should determine what is collected and how it is presented. Data should be presented in a brief accessible format that facilitates sharing and decision-making. Local data protection laws should be adhered to when collecting, storing and using data. *See Key Action 7.3 on Administration.*

An effective monitoring and evaluation selects methods and tools suited to the context, combining qualitative and quantitative data as appropriate. Different approaches and tools suit different performance, assessment or accountability purposes. A variety of methods may be used including self-audits, external audits, listening exercises, quality assurance tools, and internal learning and reflection exercises. *The section "Further resources and information" provides some useful examples.*

Key Action 4.2 Use transparent and accessible methods to receive and give open feedback

Quality Measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. Open feedback has been given and received. 2. Feedback mechanisms are transparent and accessible.	1. Assessment policy. 2. Staff training on how to give and receive open feedback. 3. Methods to receive or provide feedback are published and accessible (e.g. posters; handbooks; web site; programme literature). 4. Communicated outcome from questionnaires and / or surveys. 5. Interviews with candidates and staff. 6. Intended use and users of the data communicated. 7. Process to receive and give open feedback.

A **feedback mechanism** is a formal system designed and used to allow recipients of services to provide information and opinions on their experience (in this case about you and your services). Feedback is then used to improve the services offered, your effectiveness, your efficiency or for other purposes generally aiming at enhancing quality.

Feedback mechanisms should be accessible and straightforward, and all candidates and client organisations should be encouraged to share feedback on their experience and the services they have used. Feedback is often prompted through monitoring and evaluation (for example, a form to be completed by the candidate or the client organisation on the assessment experience, the quality of services provided, the quality of installation and any other matter you want to monitor), but sometimes it will be generated spontaneously or outside of monitoring and evaluation activities. In either case, you should have a mechanism in place to record feedback and use it to inform the review of their services. It is important that staff who are likely to receive feedback either because of their designated role (for example an M&E Manager) or because of their frequent contact with stakeholders (for example Assessors) are adequately trained on how to give and receive feedback, and are aware of your policy on how feedback is handled.

Feedback mechanisms can be explained and made accessible to users through posters, handbooks, websites, and forms and so on. Measures should be taken to allow people with different capacities to provide feedback (e.g. not only in writing).

Being open and transparent about monitoring findings increases your accountability to candidates and client organisations. First of all, results of questionnaires and surveys should be communicated, at least in aggregate form. At the same time, managing expectations is important, as candidates, client organisations or staff may believe that their feedback will automatically result in their desired outcome. You should take care to be honest and transparent about how feedback will be used to avoid generating frustration and disappointment. This can be explained in the M&E Policy (*See KA 4.1)*

The humanitarian system has made great progress in recent years in designing feedback mechanisms; they are generally meant for targeted population and beneficiaries of different services, however their example could be of inspiration to design useful feedback mechanisms for you. A study on humanitarian feedback mechanisms[9] suggests as desirable features:

- Periodic reassessment and adjustments
- Cultural / context appropriateness
- Expectation setting and knowledge
- Feedback collection
- Verification and analysis of feedback information
- Feedback acknowledgement, response and utilisation
- Individual and organisational support

Further examples and guidance on feedback mechanisms can be found under "Further Resources and Information."

An **assessment system** is a controlled and ordered process designed to ensure that assessment decisions made in relation to many individuals, by many assessors, in many situations are consistent, fair, valid and reliable.[10] You will need to develop a system/mechanism for assessment including:

- standardised assessment tools and methods
- a guide outlining assessment procedures if assessment is to be conducted in person

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[9] ALNAP (2013), Effective humanitarian feedback mechanisms - Methodology summary for a joint ALNAP and CDA action research, working draft.

[10] TPAMP, Guide 10

- standardised marking procedures and grading system
- a mechanism to moderate markers/assessors' work to ensure they make standardised decisions
- a mechanism for sharing assessment results with candidates

Key Action 4.3 Record and deal with concerns and complaints

Quality Measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. A documented concerns and complaints policy exists, is communicated and implemented. 2. Concerns and complaints are resolved.	1. Complaints / concerns policy. 2. Documented and time constrained complaints / concerns process. 3. Communicated complaints / concerns policy (e.g. in handbooks; web site; assessment materials; posters). 4. Where used, evidence that process has been followed. 5. Data kept confidentially. 6. Outcomes of complaints and concerns are recorded. 7. Process to ensure that outcomes lead into lessons learnt (Cross reference to 4.4) 8. Nominated role with responsibility for concerns and complaints.

For the purposes of this handbook we define **concern** as a worry, while a **complaint** is a statement or expression that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable. In either case, concerns or complaints should be handled correctly by you. An organisation can have a specific stand alone "Concerns and Complaints Policy", or it can include the subject under a more general "Monitoring and Evaluation Policy" (*on M&E Policy, see KA 4.1).*

A complaint contains a specific grievance and can alert you to serious misconduct, allowing you to take timely action to improve quality of your activities and services. All organisations are susceptible to fraud or abuse of power and a complaints system can help you to recognise and respond to malpractice, manipulation and exploitation.

Complaints mechanisms should be safe and accessible for candidates and client organisations, with designated staff available and trained on how to handle complaints. The complaints process needs to be clearly explained to staff, candidates and client organisations, and mechanisms are needed for both sensitive (i.e. relating to corruption, sexual exploitation and abuse, or gross misconduct where confidentiality is the focus) and non-sensitive information (e.g. challenges to use of selection criteria - where transparency is the focus)). Information regarding complaints should be kept confidential regardless of their sensitivity, and complaints-handling mechanisms

must ensure that information on complaints is kept confidential. Information recorded should only be stored for as long as it is needed. As mentioned earlier, organisations should abide by local data protection laws.

A **Concern and Complaints Policy** (or the concern and complaints component of a broader Monitoring and Evaluation Policy) could include and explain clearly the following elements:
- Raising concerns or making suggestions
- Making complaints
- Who can complain
- How to make a complaint or raise a concern
- Who is responsible for dealing with concerns and complaints
- How concerns and complaints are handled
- Anonymous complaints
- Timeframes

All concerns and complaints should be acknowledged and the complainant informed of when they can expect a response; a response should be given within the specified timeframe and a record should be kept of all concerns and complaints made, including the time taken to respond, the response given, and how the issue was resolved; for example, if the complainant accepted the response, if any follow up actions were taken, or if any recommendations were made for changes in organisation policy or processes. The right to appeal should also be built into complaints mechanisms.

In addition, having a whistle-blowing policy in place would be useful to provide a mechanism for staff to register complaints or concerns about poor practice or conduct of colleagues.

You are encouraged to develop and promote among staff a Code of Conduct including ethical dimensions in assessments (*to this regard, see Standard 3 - Delivery*) and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Following CHS guidance:
An organisation and its senior management are responsible for ensuring that complaints mechanisms and procedures against sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) are in place, safe, transparent, accessible and confidential. Organisations should consider including specific statements about cooperating with investigations into SEA cases, where appropriate, in their partnership agreements.

Key Action 4.4 Use lessons learnt and best practice to guide change, encourage continuous improvement and make sure assessment services remain fit for purpose
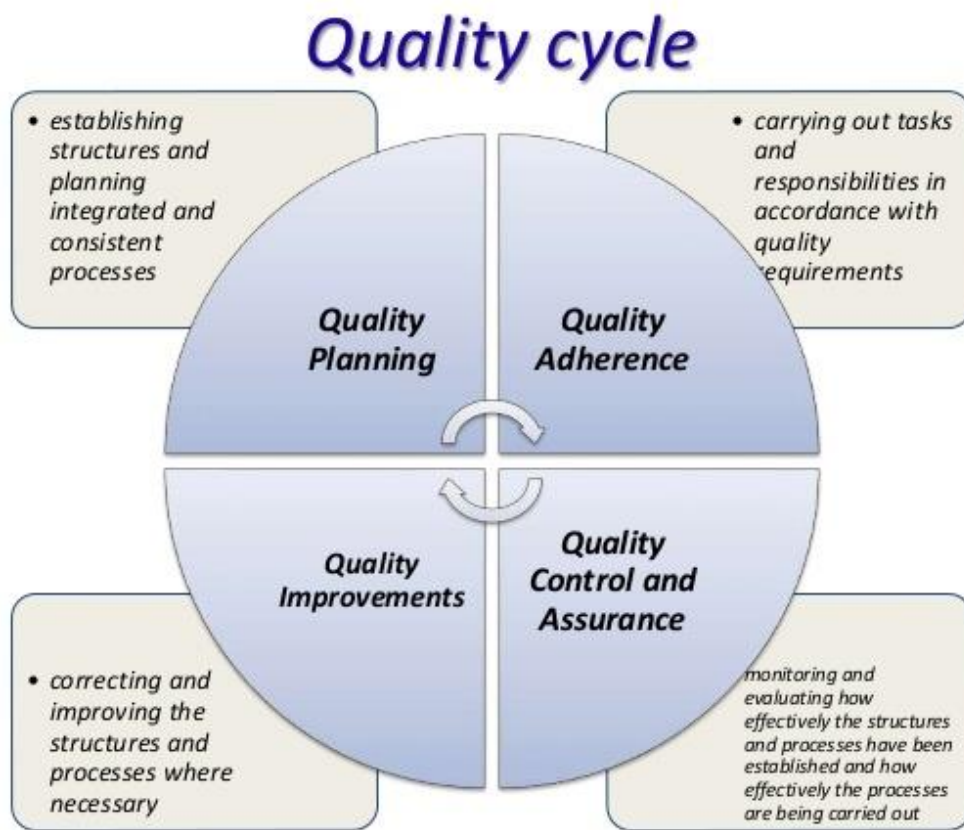
Quality Measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. A quality cycle is in place that results in continuous improvement and shows that assessment provision remains up to date and fit for purpose.	1. A staged quality cycle is documented and used. 2. The stages in the quality cycle are clear and scheduled. 3. A process to draw information from all parts of the assessment cycle, including complaints and concerns (Cross reference to 4.3). 4. Feedback from staff and candidates (Cross reference to 4.2). 5. Internal review process. 6. Monitoring and evaluation meetings (Cross reference to 4.1). 7. Evidence that change has been made (e.g. to assessment plan; resources; staff; policies; assessment tools). 8. Evidence of continuous improvement (e.g. refined assessment tools; higher level of achievement; reputation (e.g. inspections; accreditation; endorsement; recognition). 9. Schedule for review of assessment tools and methods. 10. Recorded changes made to assessment tools and methods. 11. Nominated role with responsibility for quality.

You should have a policy and processes in place for **quality control**. The specific quality control systems that are appropriate to the organisation will vary in scale and scope depending on the assessment services provided, but would include as a minimum:

● **Content and methodology:** To ensure that assessment practice remains up to date and fit for purpose, periodic review of criteria, assessment processes, tools, methodology and practice should be conducted by suitably qualified staff.

- **Delivery of services:** the results from monitoring and evaluations, as well as feedback completed by candidates or client organisations, can provide useful information on the quality of service delivery. Regular review of the results of monitoring and evaluations can identify any areas where services require improvement. Lessons learnt and best practice from internal reviews and evaluations can also inform improvements to policies, systems and procedures.

The quality cycle that can help you improve and enhance your services is structured in four components, as indicated in the figure below:

Quality cycle

- establishing structures and planning integrated and consistent processes

Quality Planning

- carrying out tasks and responsibilities in accordance with quality requirements

Quality Adherence

Quality Improvements

Quality Control and Assurance

- correcting and improving the structures and processes where necessary

- monitoring and evaluating how effectively the structures and processes have been established and how effectively the processes are being carried out

Policies and standards will provide indicators on quality adherence, or how to carry out activities according to quality requirements; while recommendations for improvements of content, methodology, and services will emerge from the results of participatory monitoring and evaluation (*See Key Action 4.1 for more details on designing participatory monitoring and evaluation)*, as well as from feedback (*See Key Action 4.2*), internal reviews, and external evaluations.

Recommendations for improvement should be recorded, detailing whether any follow up actions were agreed including timeframes for these. Mechanisms should be established to follow up whether the recommendations are implemented, and to gauge whether the expected improvements in the service were achieved. Relevant improvements should also be integrated into organisational policies and standards to be sustained.

Monitoring should periodically check whether the assessment services continue to be relevant to candidates' needs and to the industry. Findings should lead to revisions to the services as appropriate. In some occasions, this revision is done by a piloting committee that analyse the monitoring information and decide on changes and adaptations of the services. This committee also supervise the implementation of the recommendations.

Performance monitoring and 'real-time evaluation' can also be carried out periodically, leading to immediate changes in policy and practice. Evaluations are usually carried out by independent, external evaluators but internal staff members can also evaluate a service as long as they take an objective approach.

Once improvements are determined (and piloted if pertinent), they shall be included in the design of assessment programmes in order to be fully integrated in the cycle. *For more on design of assessment programmes, see Standard 2 - Design.*

Annexes (Tools and templates)

Relevant Key Action	Tool/Template	Annex number

Further resources and information related to Standard 4: Evaluation and accountability

Campaign protocol for collecting feedback

An example of protocol, adaptable to the case of Assessment Providers

CEDEFOP (2015), Handbook for VET Providers

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3068 (last access 9 February 2018)

Dimensions model for evaluating assessment and feedback

A tool designed to help programme and/or module teams reflect on how a current assessment might be ranked against dimensions of good assessment & feedback practice.

https://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/development/academic/resources/assessment/radar/model/ (last access 9 February 2018)

Example of Improvement Action Plan

CEDEFOP (2015), Handbook for VET Providers

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3068 (last access 9 February 2018)

Model Plan - Internal Audit Planning Process

Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (2001), Training Package Assessment Materials Project - Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment

http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/456376/Guide-10.pdf (last access 8 February 2018)

The following outlines a planning process for setting up an internal audit in your organisation. Some of the critical activities you will need to undertake are:
- provide training for potential auditors
- maintain a register of auditors and their audit activity
- ensure that the auditors comply with the AQTF Code of Practice
- establish a lead auditor who is responsible for all phases of the audit process
- establish clear description of roles and responsibilities of all personnel in the audit process
- encourage audits to be conducted in teams to:
  - enable effective mentoring to occur between experienced auditors and inexperienced auditors
  - ensure that teams provide the mix of expertise required
- develop suitable documentation to support the audit process

- conduct feedback sessions for auditors annually to review the audit process
- conduct audits using personnel who do not have direct responsibility for the area being audited
- establish an audit plan that is:
    - approved by all stakeholders
    - flexible, to enable changes in emphasis and resources
- develop an audit plan that includes:
    - clear objectives and scope
    - identification of procedures to be audited
    - identification of audit team members
    - identification of personnel contacted in the audit
    - date and place of audit
- develop an audit observation form to enable the summary of the audit event; include such information as:
    - identification of policy, procedure or aspect of AQTF being audited
    - date of audit
    - observation notes
    - recommendations for improvement
    - names and signatures of audit team.

Planning Proforma for Quality Assurance Strategies

Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (2001), Training Package Assessment Materials Project - Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment
http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/456376/Guide-10.pdf (last access 8 February 2018)

Quality assurance strategy	Description of activities	Timing	Responsibility	Resources required	Record keeping requirements
1.					
2.					
3.					
Write in which upfront and	Describe how you are going to evaluate	Indicate the date(s) the review will	Name the person(s) who will be	Describe what resources	Identify what records need to be kept of

ongoing quality assurance strategies you will be using	each of the quality assurance strategies.	take place.	responsible for evaluating the quality assurance activities.	these activities will need, for example people, time, physical resources.	the review and what form these will take, for example recording sheets, feedback sheets, etc.

Quality Assurance strategies - Evaluation outcomes templates

Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (2001), Training Package Assessment Materials Project - Guide 10: Quality assurance guide for assessment

http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/456376/Guide-10.pdf (last access 8 February 2018)

Quality assurance strategy	Outcome of review activities	Follow-up action for continuous improvement
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
Filing details: _____ _____ _____ _____		

Quality RPL Systems Self-Audit Checklist

Included in Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (2015), Quality Assurance for RPL in Canada - The Manual

http://capla.ca/rpl-qa-manual/ (last access 8 February 2018)

RPL Quality Procedures Checklist

Included in Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (2015), Quality Assurance for RPL in Canada - The Manual

http://capla.ca/rpl-qa-manual/ (last access 8 February 2018)

Self reflection on assessment

This tool is meant for teachers, but it is easily adaptable to assessors.

CEDEFOP (2015), Handbook for VET Providers

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3068 (last access 9 February 2018)

ALNAP (2013), Effective humanitarian feedback mechanisms - Methodology summary for a joint ALNAP and CDA action research, working draft.

https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/method-paper-26-2-13.pdf (last access 9 February 2018)

ALNAP (2014), What makes feedback mechanisms work?

http://cdacollaborative.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/What-Makes-Feeback-Mechanism-Work-Literature-Review.pdf (last access 9 February 2018)

Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (2015), Quality Assurance for RPL in Canada - The Manual

http://capla.ca/rpl-qa-manual/ (last access 8 February 2018)

The following resources talk about mechanisms to be used by crisis-affected population, nevertheless they provide examples and guidance that can be useful for Assessment Providers:

CDA (2015) "The Listening Program":
 http://cdacollaborative.org/cdaproject/the-listening-project/

CHS Alliance, the Sphere Project and Groupe URD (2015) 'CHS Guidance Notes and Indicators', especially Commitment 5 on complaints mechanisms and Commitment 7 on learning and improvement:

https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/files/files/CHS-Guidance-Notes-and-Indicators.pdf

Danish Refugee Council (2008) 'Complaints Mechanism Handbook':

http://www.alnap.org/resource/8762

IASC Task force on PSEA (2009) 'Guidelines on Setting Up a Community Based Complaints Mechanism Regarding Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and non-UN Personnel': www.pseataskforce.org/uploads/tools/1351822689.pdf

Save the Children (2013) 'Putting Accountability into Practice': http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/programme-accountability-guidance-pack-save-children-resource

The following list was prepared by HLA to inform their Systems-based MEAL Approaches:

Action Against Hunger, START Network (2016) Disasters & Emergency Preparedness Project Learning Report

American Evaluation Association (2006) Systems Concepts in Evaluation – An Expert Anthology, Editors: Bob Williams and Iraj Imam.

Baker, Jock. (2014) Humanitarian Capacity- Building and Collaboration: Lessons from the Emergency Capacity Building Project. Network Paper Number 78, June 2014. London: Overseas Development Institute Humanitarian Practice Network.

Befani, Barbara., Ramalingam, Ben., Stern, Elliot., (2015) Introduction - Towards Approaches to Evaluation and Impact, IDS Bulletin Volume 46 Number 1

Cosgrave, John, et al., (2012), Evaluation of the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA) Pilot, DARA

Davis, Kate and Russ, Catherine (2016) DEPP Capacity Strengthening Approaches: reflections on best practice and measuring effectiveness London: Start Network

Disaster Resilience Group (2014) A decade of Learning – Lessons from an Evaluation of the Emergency Capacity Building (ECB) Project

Emergency Capacity Building Project. Available at: www.ecbproject.org/simulations

Emergency Capacity Building Project (2012) ECB Interactive Regional Learning Conferences Global Learning Report

Emergency Capacity Building Project (2006). Humanitarian Competencies Study. Washington, DC: Emergency Capacity Building Project.

Ferris Morris, Margie., and Shaughnessy, Daniel. (2007). Final Evaluation Report: Emergency Capacity Building Project. Arlington, VA: Social Impact, Inc.

Friedeberg, Tom, and Perry, Steve. (2011). Mid-Term Evaluation Phase II: Emergency Capacity Building Project. London: ALNAP. Available at: http://www.alnap.org/ resource/10638.

Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (2017) The Disasters & Emergency Preparedness Programme Evaluation Formative Phase Report London: START Network.

Hockaday, David, and Lumsdon, Sarah. (2012). ECB Project Case Study: Playing with Reality— The ECB Experience Using Emergency Simulations to Improve Humanitarian Response. Washington, DC:

Hopkins, Bryan. (2017) Learning and Performance, A Systemic Model for Analyzing Needs and Evaluating Training London: Routledge

Hoppe, Kelsey., Older, Malka., and Ali, Mo. (2016) Talent Development Project Mid-Term Review, Start Network, Save the Children

Horton, Douglas et al. (2003) Evaluating Capacity Development: Experiences from Research and Development Organizations around the World The Hague: ISNAR and Ottawa: IDRC

Morgan, Peter. (2013) 'Evaluating Capacity Development' in Donaldson, Stewart., Azzam, Tarek., and Conner, Ross. Emerging Practices in International Development Evaluation Charlotte NC: IAP – Information Age Publishing

Mowjee, Tasneem., and Greenhalgh, Langdon. (2013) Final Evaluation of the Emergency Capacity Building Project (Phase 2). Global Emergency Group.

Simister, Nigel., with Smith, Rachel. (2010) Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity Building: Is it really that difficult? Praxis Paper 23 INTRAC January 2010.

Williams, Bob. (2015) Prosaic or Profound? The Adoption of Systems Ideas by Impact Evaluation, IDS Bulletin, Volume 46 no. 1

Williams, Bob., and Hummelbrunner, Richard. (2011) Systems Concepts in Action: A Practitioner's Toolkit Stanford CA.: Stanford University Press

Willliams, Bob. (2016) Using Systems Concepts in Evaluation Design: A Workbook http://www.bobwilliams.co.nz

Standard 5 - Resources

There are enough appropriate resources

Why is this standard important?

You need to ensure that you have adequate resources to deliver your services. Resources, particularly human and physical resources, are often the largest proportion of programme budgets and therefore should be carefully managed. The actions of staff are the basis of an effective assessment service. Staff should be carefully supported to ensure they will produce the best outcomes for candidates/learners.

Overall Guidance

In this standard the term resources relates to human, physical, digital and financial resources. Human resources covers staff and contractors who support all aspects of the assessment process. Physical resources covers consumable items, assets, equipment, assessment materials and any physical environments. Digital resources includes online databases, resources libraries or on line platforms for example, financial resources refers to money used for all aspects of the assessment process.

Good Practice

Example 1: In an earthquake zone, it is good practice to assess buildings for structural and non-structural risks and take actions to mitigate them. Assessment Providers should have evacuation plans and procedures in place. Staff members should be trained in how to remain safe and provide guidance to candidates on procedures in case of emergency.

Example 2: In some contexts, security threats may also be pertinent to assessment/learning provision. Where a learning event gathers high profile people, a particular community group or expats may be perceived as an easy target for attack. Risk assessments and security procedures can help to mitigate against threats.

Specific Guidance Relating to Each Key Action

Key Action 5.1 Identify what resources you need to design and deliver effective assessments

Quality Measures	Quality indicators
1. Identified and documented required resources for effective and accurate assessments (cross reference to 2.5). 2. Post assessment review to check effectiveness and accuracy of assessments.	1. List of required resources (human and physical) mapped to assessment plan. 2. Plan to create assessment tools and methods where gaps are found. 3. Post assessment review meetings held and recorded to ensure that assessments have been conducted effectively and accurately.

Identifying your required resources will involve assessing current organisational resource capacity in relation to the organisation's strategic objectives. Based on the analysis, a clear list of required resources can be made and planned for.

Resources for assessment include all physical, digital and human resources needed to deliver an effective and accurate assessment service. Organisation plans must take into account staff capacity to ensure the right numbers of staff with the right skills are in the right place at the right time. Developing an evaluation grid for the recruitment of a sufficient number of staff may be helpful. (See Annex 15 for a sample)

Creating job descriptions is a key step to ensure competent staff members can be recruited to fulfil assessment needs. Job descriptions can be supplemented with documentation of responsibilities using a tool such as a Responsible Accountable Consulted and Informed diagram (RACI) that for each task lays out who is responsible, accountable, who should be consulted and who should be informed. (See Annex 16 for sample assessor job description and Annex 17 for an example of a RACI diagram)

Plans should include all the resources needed to carry out assessments. Examples for each are listed below:

- **Design**: physical or digital library of resources on the assessment content and topics, competency frameworks, assessment tools.
- **Development**: software packages, candidate assessment information. An example would be an Assessment instrument appropriate to candidates' objectives and needs.
- **Delivery**: physical venue/assessment centre, supplies, materials, administrative tracking systems

Resource plans should also include resources needed to perform administrative functions such as human resources, financial management and logistics. *More on administrative and logistics support in Standard 7: Administration.*

Key Action 5.2 Put in place procedures for getting, maintaining and managing enough appropriate resources

Quality Measures	Suggested Quality indicators
1. The availability of resources is considered and recorded during the design of developments (cross reference to 2.5). The location of resources identified in 5.1 is documented. The use of the resources is monitored and documented (cross reference to 3.4).	1. Identified role(s) with responsibility for allocating resources (human and physical) for planned assessments. 2. Post assessment review of resources with documented change when required. 3. Recorded changes to design of assessments when resource implication makes it necessary. 4. Assessment plan that identifies required resources (human and physical). Interviews with staff.

Human resources management: Careful recruitment, screening and hiring practices can help to ensure staff members have the required competencies (the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours) needed to fulfil their roles. Having potential assessors participate in an assessment of their own competencies is one way to evaluate their appropriateness.

Physical resource management: Having robust procurement policies and procedures in place will help to manage resources efficiently and accurately. Key risks that require specific skills and systems to mitigate are procurement, and stock management. Accounting records should satisfy

accepted national standards and should be applied systematically within the organisation. Where possible, green procurement policies can help to ensure that unintended negative environmental effects are avoided. (i.e. overuse of paper). Items procured that are of a higher value should be identified with an asset number and recorded on an asset register. This might include items such as vehicles to be used in simulations; equipment for demonstrations such as a generator for use on the assessment of logistic prior learning; IT equipment. Consumable items that may need to be periodically replaced should also be tracked. These items might include: water testing and measuring kits for use on assessment related to WASH field officer position; or examples of ready to use therapeutic foods (such as Plumpy'nut) for use on the assessment of Nutrition prior learning.

It is also important that items are stored safely, securely and appropriately. This is particularly important for many of the items that might be used in the assessment of security related competencies such as weapons and explosives. These need to be stored: in a secure location that cannot be accessed by unauthorised personnel; in a cabinet or container that will ensure that they do not degrade; in a location that is at a distance from staff or candidates in case of accidental ex
plosions; in a manner that is compliant with local laws (for example, it may be necessary to register the equipment with the police).

Key Action 5.3 Make sure there are competent and appropriate staff available to design and deliver assessments

Quality Measures	Suggested Quality indicators
1. An accurate, up to date organization chart exists. 2. The allocation of staff to assessment opportunities is recorded to show that there is a sufficient number of competent and appropriate staff to design, develop and conduct assessments.	1. Staffing recruitment policy and procedures. 2. Staffing levels. 3. Organisation chart with appropriate numbers of staff for each role. 4. Candidate / assessor ratio. 5. Qualifications and experience of staff checked and mapped to assessment requirements. 6. Monitoring of staff turnover. 7. Feedback from candidates and staff. 8. Staff training. 9. Interviews with staff.

Maintaining a sufficient number of staff to carry out assessments may involve creating and maintaining a roster or a database of individuals with diverse profiles and relevant experience that can be called upon. Organisational plans should take into account how they will address peaks in demand for qualified staff.

High staff turnover can undermine programme quality and continuity and should be addressed to understand the causes so any situation can be mitigated.

Competency and appropriateness of staff should be proactively monitored through performance management systems and take into account feedback from staff members, candidates and client organisations. Performance management reviews should be designed to indicate competency levels in relation to their knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes described in their job descriptions. Those who are conducting assessments should be supported with regular observations and feedback sessions.

Assessors should be trained and receive all guidelines/tools/regulations for assessment and grading. Where capacity gaps are found in new or existing staff members, they should be acknowledged and a short to medium term plan put in place to close those gaps with SMART indicators to assess the impact in case gaps are not solved.

Staff members may need to build their own competencies to keep their knowledge fresh and to meet evolving demands for humanitarian action. Building competencies may take place in the form of on-the-job training, peer coaching, work shadowing, exchanges, mentoring, on-line learning, attending training courses or other means. (*For more information see Further Resources and information section*). Each staff member should have a continuous professional development plan.

The appropriateness of staff needs to consider gender issues, for instance, you may need female assessors due to cultural norms and preferences.

You need to ensure assessors are certified or approved to undertake the assessment; this can be done internally or externally. You may offer to the assessors training in-house, but probably you will ask the assessors to be qualified before being recruited.

Key Action 5.4 Treat staff in a fair and open way and not discriminate against them

Quality Measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. A Code of Conduct. 2. HR policies are compliant with local labour law. 3. Policies and procedures comply with local labour law. 4. A non-discriminatory grievance procedures exist and are communicated.	1. Code of conduct. 2. Published HR policies. 3. Feedback from staff that indicates a culture of openness and trust. 4. Published and accessible grievance procedure. 5. Interviews with staff.

The treatment of staff will have a strong impact on the services overall performance. Staff members should feel informed and supported by you at all times. The style and complexity of staff policies and procedures will depend on your size and context of the assessment. However simple or complex you may be, staff should participate in the development and review of policies where possible to ensure that their views are represented. A staff manual facilitates knowledge of and consultation on policies. Policies should include for example: recruitment policy; whistleblowing, grievance and disciplinary policies; diversity/ inclusivity policy; maternity, paternity and child care policies. All staff should be issued with contracts that clearly outline expectations, responsibilities and terms and conditions of employment.

To ensure fairness, recruitment should be open and understandable to all staff and applicants. Such transparency includes the development and sharing of updated and relevant job descriptions for each post and is essential to establish diverse and competent teams. Existing teams can increase their appropriateness and diversity through new recruitment as required. Rapid staff expansion may lead to the recruitment of inexperienced team members who should be supported by experienced staff.

Treating all staff members in a non-discriminatory manner entails establishing policies and/or codes that define acceptable behaviour and gaining agreement from staff members to follow it. The nature of assessment puts staff in a position of power over candidates. No staff member in the provision of services should be party to abuse, corruption or sexual exploitation. To reinforce

this, it is important that staff are asked to sign a code of conduct. This can be one created specifically for the organisation or it can be drowned from existing sector-related code of conduct on sexual exploitation or sexual abuse like the ones used by peacekeeping forces or some NGOs. Also, a wider ethical code of conduct can be useful such as the Code of Conduct for International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief.

It is your responsibility to ensure that staff policies and employment contracts are compliant with local labour law. A compliance (grievance) mechanism should be in place and accessible to staff.

Key Action 5.5 Have in place reasonable measures to make sure staff are safe and secure and that their wellbeing is protected

Quality Measures	Suggested Quality indicators
1. Staff safety, security and wellbeing policy and procedures in place and operative.(Cross reference to 3.3). 2. Risk assessments in place.	1. Staff, safety, security and wellbeing policy. Risk assessments. 2. Documented evidence that adjustments, changes and other reasonable measures have been taken to ensure staff safety, security and wellbeing. 3. Policy about health, safety and security of computer use. 4. Interviews with staff.

Humanitarian action takes place in a wide range of contexts and therefore organisational measures to ensure safety, security and wellbeing will be dependent on the operational environment.

Your duty of care to your workers includes actions to promote well-being and avoid burnout, injury or illness. You could benefit from a duty of care policy. Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff members are aware of risks to them and know how to act accordingly.
You can use a variety of methods to share decided measures: emails; records of meetings; assessment schedule; feedback from staff; feedback from candidates, etc

You are responsible for conducting risk assessments taking into account the hazards, vulnerabilities and risks in the environment and take actions to reduce the risk. You need to also make sure that you have the appropriate level of insurance for the activities that you are undertaking.

One example: In an earthquake zone, it is good practice to assess buildings for structural and non-structural risks and take actions to mitigate them. You should have evacuation plans and procedures in place. Staff members should be trained in how to remain safe and provide guidance to candidates on procedures in case of emergency.

This key action is closely related to key action 3.7: Implement reasonable measures to ensure candidates' safety, security and wellbeing. Further details can be found in this section.

Annexes (Tools and templates)

Relevant Key Action	Tool/Template	Annex number
5.1	Evaluation grid	Annex 15
5.1	Sample assessor job description	Annex 16
5.1	Example of RACI diagram	Annex 17

Annex 17 – Example of a RACI diagram for assessment process set up

The RACI diagram can be completed in relation to a selected assessment programme or event, or in relation to ongoing activities.

Activity	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed
Contextualise assessment tools	Assessor	Assessor	Candidate Client organisation	
Send instructions for the simulation	Assessment administrator	Assessor	Client organisation	N/A

Print assessment materials and prepare the venue	Assessment administrator	Assessment administrator	Assessor Venue manager	
Etc….				

Further resources and information related to Standard 5: Resources

CHS Alliance (2015) HR Tool:
http://chsalliance.org/files/files/Resources/Tools-and-guidance/CHS-Alliance-Handbook-for-Managing-HR-Effectiveness-Final.pdf

CBHA (2010) 'Core Humanitarian Competencies Guide: Humanitarian Capacity Building Throughout the Employee Life Cycle':
http://www.start-network.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Core-Humanitarian-Competencies-Guide.pdf

DisasterReady is an online learning library of more than 600 training resources is constantly expanding and covers core topics such as Humanitarianism, Program/Operations, Protection, Staff Welfare, Management and Leadership, Staff Safety & Security, and Soft Skills
https://ready.csod.com

ECB (2007) 'Building Trust in Diverse Teams: The Toolkit for Emergency Response':
http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/building-trust-in-diverse-teams-the-toolkit-for-emergency-response-115413

ICRC (1994), Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-1067.pdf

Kaya on-line is a learning platform with hundreds of online trainings, reference documents, videos and webinars covering staff safety, security and well-being, leadership and human resources management practices.
https://kayaconnect.org/

People In Aid (2011) 'Debriefing: building staff capacity':
http://chsalliance.org/files/files/Resources/Case-Studies/Debriefing-building-staff-capacity.pdf

Standard 6 - Communication

Communication is open and accessible

Why is this standard important?

This standard emphasises the need for two-way communication between you and the candidates. It ensures that there is clarity on the assessment process from beginning to end. Sharing information, communicating clearly, and listening carefully to candidates' contributes to more effective assessment services, improves the quality of services delivered.

Overall Guidance

In this standard, communication relates to: the two-way communication of information that candidates and client organisations require in order to access services and ensure smooth engagement with you at all stages of their assessment journey; and the two-way exchange of feedback between the candidate and the assessor or you regarding the candidate's needs and goals and their progress towards the achievement of these.

You need to develop and proactively implement a communications policy. You should look for opportunities to support potential candidates that have limited access to communication channels and identify ways in which you can support them to access the services you offer. All your communications should be culturally sensitive and inclusive.

Good Practice

CAPLA - Canada
Essentially, applicants want to know what to expect of your assessments. By providing sample questions, for example, or a study guide, or a list of test-taking strategies, you can help applicants to prepare for your process. Other things they may want to know include when and how to ask questions; how long the process will take; and what, if any, special requirements there may be. Providing this basic information will help many individuals to get a clear picture of what the assessment will entail. This includes contact information for a person who can answer further questions, including a name, phone number, and email.

You may consider the following guidance to be applied to all information you share, including an assessment overview, policies, and processes, frequently asked questions (FAQs), fees, and contact information.

This Standard is closely linked with Standard 7 on Administration. A function of administration is to ensure that candidates receive appropriate information in a timely manner.

Specific Guidance Relating to Each Key Action

Key Action 6.1 Establish and maintain appropriate and accessible communication with candidates and organisations

Quality Measures	Suggested quality indicators
1. Two-way communication channels exist. 2. Communication channels are appropriate, open and accessible. 3. Communication channels are used and maintained.	1. Communication policy. 2. Published communication channels (e.g. Website contact; appropriate and secure email addresses; monitored email addresses; published accurate address; named role contacts). 3. Methods of communication have been researched and tested for appropriateness 4. Communications from candidates, staff or organisations. 5. Communications to candidates, staff or organisations. 6. Communications show cultural sensitivity. 7. Appropriate communication methods are used for different messages. 8. Response time agreements. 9. Process to establish and maintain accessible communication channels. 10. Nominated role with responsibility for communication.

You may have a **communication policy,** whose extent and scope will vary depending on your size and resources and the services you deliver. It can be a simple document that outlines only the key elements if you are small, or it can be a more articulated policy if you are big offering multiple types of services.

The communication policy includes the following elements:

- Communication principles
- Purpose (internal/external communication)
- Policy statement(s)
- Procedures

- Roles and responsibilities
- Use of different communications channels
- Legal issues and data protection (according to local legislation)

To establish **appropriate communication channels**, you should evaluate your own capacity and that of the potential candidates and client organisations to access different communication channels. This may include any combination of written and oral communications (such as e-mail, social media, websites, written letters, phone, or platforms like Skype; information sessions or meetings, guidelines and information materials, etc.).

Accessibility refers to the fact that selected communication channels should be adaptable to support the needs of all candidates particularly candidates with limited access to communications technology or with different capacities, like disability or no literacy.

The content of the message should also be considered when selecting which communication channel to use in particular cases. For example, you may establish a policy for the acceptable communication channel for delivering different types of information (i.e. delivering an open invitation to participate versus sensitive information such as assessment results, in this case you will not display sensitive information in a board; or if you need a record you will use an email rather than using the phone).

In some contexts there are cultural implications regarding the communication channel selected. For example, a written document or invitation will have more bearing than one that is delivered via e-mail.

You should seek to promote a culture of open communication to encourage ongoing dialogue between staff, candidates and client organisations. Management can model positive communication behaviours by inviting open conversations with staff members.

Maintenance of communication channels means that you will need to periodically review the channels that have been put into place taking into account feedback from staff members, client organisations and candidates through feedback, complaints mechanisms and lessons learned and subsequently act upon them. The Communication Policy should also be revised if monitoring, evaluation or feedback highlight policy-level communications issues to be addressed.

Key Action 6.2 Provide relevant, clear and accurate information about assessment services

Quality Measures	Quality indicators
1. All information about assessment services is provided in a clear, accurate and relevant way.	1. Accurate and up to date website. 2. Permission to access and use communication channels is allocated to appropriate people. 3. Published information about assessment services is up to date and accurate. 4. Information about assessment services is clear. 5. Interviews with candidates. 6. Control versions of documents. 7. Sign off process for published information. 8. Communication policy.

Relevant information about assessment services should cover the assessment process (including duration and steps), the assessment policy of the organisation, assessment topics and objectives, examples of competency frameworks and assessment criteria, the application process, any deadlines for enrolment, selection or eligibility criteria, average time to be devoted by the candidate, your roles and responsibilities and the candidates' ones, and expected outcomes from participation. It is important to check that communications do not set unrealistic expectations for candidates, it has to be clear, for instance: a communication written in the right tone and using the right level of language according to the receiver.

You should make sure that the information provided is easily understood and that the candidate has access to all the information they need to enrol and participate in the assessment process. Communication should be done in languages, formats and media that are easily understood, respectful, inclusive and culturally appropriate for different humanitarian actors, especially vulnerable and marginalised groups. You should frequently update information about assessment services across all media (website, promotional information, brochures etc.) to make sure it is accurate and does not to mislead or confuse candidates.

You can share through your communication channels samples of questions or previous assessments, useful resources to prepare for assessments, like a study guide, and other

information that can help the candidate understand what to expect and how best to prepare for the assessment. You could also provide instruction or contact details for further questions candidates may have on any part of the assessment process.

It is also important to be transparent about what will happen if the candidate is not successful the first time he/she is assessed including options for repeating the assessment and the procedure for an appeal if the candidate wishes to contest the results of the assessment, or its administration.

There are often pre-existing communication platforms in the humanitarian sector that can be used to communicate to potential candidates about assessment opportunities and services. Well-known websites, sector-wide platforms, NGO platforms, coordination meetings, Disaster Management and Disaster Risk Reduction Networks are often a useful place to share information.

Key Action 6.3 Communicate clearly, accurately and in good time

Quality Measures	Suggested Quality indicators
1. Communications with stakeholders are clear, accurate and timely.	1. Communication policy to establish 2 way communications. 2. Communications are dated and monitored for clarity and accuracy. 3. Process to make reasonable adjustments to ensure communications materials are accessible to all. 4. Documents are dated with date for review known. 5. Content of communications is checked for accuracy, grammar, spelling, language and reviewed. 6. Staff are trained about responsibilities for communications. 7. Interviews with staff and candidates. 8. Appropriate information is communicated at the right time (e.g. before, during and after assessment). 9. Process to monitor communication.

	10. Appropriate communication channels.
	11. Process to ensure that communication are timely.

Effective communication needs to be a continuous process - done before, during and after the learning programme. It involves two-way communication between you and candidates and/or client organizations.

Policies for information sharing should be in place, and promote a culture of open communication. Policies should define and document all processes for sharing information and communication in general. These might include, for example: an organisation's commitment to accurate and timely information sharing; what information it will share with candidates and other stakeholders; how decisions will be made about when and how to share information; and the criteria used in deciding not to share information.

Information should be periodically reviewed and updated across all communication channels and shared as soon as possible if changes have been made. Information should be made within a reasonable time for candidates to make decisions regarding their participation in the assessment process and related activities.

During face to face encounters with candidates and client organisations, care must be taken to speak clearly and avoid jargon and colloquialisms, especially when the language of assessment is not the candidate's first language. It is recommended using plain language to ensure all communications are clear. There may also be a need to provide interpreters and translators.

You should also make reasonable adjustments to ensure communications materials are accessible to all. For example, making paper-based documents available in large print on request.

You can demonstrate openness by, for example, publishing in your websites the information related about the assessment process, the competency framework you use and a document with frequently asked questions (FAQ).

Key Action 6.4 Respond to queries appropriately and in good time

Quality Measures	Suggested Quality indicators
1. Service level agreements define the timeliness of communication responses. 2. Responses to communications are made in an appropriate way.	1. Published response time service level agreements. 2. Process to respond to queries in a timely and appropriate manner. 3. Service level agreement monitored and action taken when service falls below stated level. 4. Staff training. 5. Nominated staff roles to respond or process queries. 6. Tone of responses is appropriate for the situation and the readers. 7. A process to respond to requests from distance and online learners in a timely way. 8. Interviews with candidates. 9. Register of queries that informs improvement.

You may need to establish standard response times to ensure that candidates and client organisations get the information they need in enough time to make decisions and take appropriate actions. These response times should be made public so that candidates and client organisations know what to expect. The timeframe set for responding to queries and requests should not adversely affect the candidate or the quality of the assessment process and should be reasonably in line with candidates' needs.

Care should be taken to ensure that these timeframes are adhered to, that timely answers or feedback are provided, and that queries are answered appropriately. It may be necessary to provide training to staff who will receive queries, and to identify specific staff who are responsible for responding to them. You should monitor the timeliness of responses to queries regularly as part of its M&E initiatives, and if there are significant changes (for example the responsibility to respond to queries is assigned to a new staff).

Candidates are likely to have ongoing queries about how to make an application for an assessment, how the assessment will be conducted and how results will be delivered. You can encourage potential candidates to approach you with further queries by ensuring that timely and appropriate responses are consistently provided, and providing multiple channels of communication (for example both email and telephone contacts). This will contribute towards building open and responsive two-way communication with candidates.

Queries can be used to improve communications over time; if queries are recorded and reviewed periodically, weaknesses in communications can be identified and improved. Also the most frequent queries and their answers can be used to develop a "Frequently Asked Questions" document or FAQs.

Key Action 6.5 Provide effective reporting and analysis to organisations, when required

Quality Measures	Suggested Quality indicators
1. Specific organisation needs are identified. 2. The frequency of reporting and analysis requirements are defined. 3. Reporting and analysis are effective (Cross reference to 4.4 and 5.4)	1. Specified organisation reporting and analysis needs are identified by management. 2. Reports use a defined structure to meet informational requirements. 3. Effective reporting and analysis processes in place (e.g. reports; spreadsheets; records of meetings). 4. Nominated role with responsibility for reporting and analysis. 5. Reporting communication channels defined.

You may need to communicate directly with the client organization. This communication can be in the form of a report about the assessment process and results obtained by the staff of the client organization or the candidate (in case he/she is not staff). Effective reporting indicates that reports are systematically produced using a defined structure to meet informational requirements.

Reports should be produced based on information needs and actively inform organisational decision-making and requirements for accountability to stakeholders. You should ensure the integrity and quality of assessments reports and provide specific feedback information about candidates' performance. This information about successful, partial or unsuccessful assessment can be analysed by the client organisation and, for example, be used to advise staff members on next steps (self-study, additional education or training, or work assignments). In case of candidates who are not staff members (e.g. when assessment are conducted to determine if a candidate is suitable for a job), either you or the client organisation should communicate the results to the candidate, this should be clarified from the beginning to avoid lack of feedback to candidates. *See Standard 3, Key Actions 3.5 and 3.6 for more information.*

Annexes (Tools and templates)

Further resources and Information related to Standard 6: Communication

Communication media

ECB (2007) 'Building Trust in Diverse Teams: The Toolkit for Emergency Response': http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/building-trust-in-diverse-teams-the-toolkit-for-emergency-response-115413 (last visit 11 February 2018)

Cultural differences in communications style

ECB (2007) 'Building Trust in Diverse Teams: The Toolkit for Emergency Response': http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/building-trust-in-diverse-teams-the-toolkit-for-emergency-response-115413 (last visit 11 February 2018)

 IFRC (2017) Beneficiary Communications and Accountability Baseline Assessment Grid http://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/02/Beneficiary-Communications-and-Accountability-Baseline-Assessment-Grid.pdf (last visit 11 February 2018)

The Bioforce Institute (no date), Contacts
A good example of a contact and information page with multiple resources (in French)
http://humanitaire.institutbioforce.fr/node/770 (last visit 11 February 2018)

Standard 7 - Administration

Administration systems are secure and accurate

Why is this standard important?

Administrative systems, processes and procedures support the delivery of quality assessment services and enable candidates and client organisations to access these services. Effective administrative support enables the smooth delivery of assessment services. Ineffective administrative support can not only cause practical delays but can also hinder the assessment process itself.

Overall Guidance

You should ensure that your administrative systems, processes and procedures are sufficient to provide effective support for candidates and client organisations.

Administrative support should be available to candidates and client organisations throughout the assessment process.

Good Practice

Case studies or stories of success to illustrate how guidance could be applied in real world situations

Data protection laws will govern and inform some administration systems, particularly relating to managing personal data of candidates.

Specific Guidance Relating to Each Key Action

Key Action 7.1 Provide effective administrative and logistical support to candidates and organisations

Quality Measures	Suggested Quality indicators
1. Auditable evidence exists that effective administrative support is given to candidates and organisations.	1. Administrative and logistics support processes. 2. Identified role with responsibility for candidate and organisation support. 3. Effectiveness of support monitored by an identified process. 4. Audit trail of support processes. 5. Feedback from candidates and organisations that proves effectiveness of support 6. Records that time zones and modality are taken into consideration for distance and online candidates. 7. Interviews with candidates and organisations

Effective administrative support for candidates and client organisations includes establishing and maintaining routine processes to ensure that all learners or organisations receive the same level of administrative support.

Candidates and client organisations may need administrative support:
- before assessments: for example to access information about an assessment process, how to access it, and any preparation they need to undertake in advance to complete an application;
- during the assessment process: for example to inform candidates about any modification of dates and times to meet the jury, or how to proceed if they will be absent due to illness;
- after completing assessments: for example to receive proof of the recognition they received, or proof of payment, or proof of attendance to the tests...

Administrative support can be provided in person, by phone, or online either in real time or through email.

In some contexts, candidates might also need logistical support to attend the tests, for example with transport to get to the venue. The support required will vary depending on the circumstances of the candidate or client organisation. You should also consider the context you are operating in when determining the types of administrative and logistical support candidates may need. For example, mothers of young kids who might need logistics support with child care, or a room for breastfeeding.

Beyond the direct administrative and logistical support provided to candidates and client organisations, it is also essential to ensure that assessment services receive appropriate support. For online assessment services this might include managing enrolment and granting access to the assessment platform, including issuing permissions and passwords to assessors and candidates, and uploading assessment materials to the platform, whilst for face to face assessments or simulations support might include managing venue bookings, and ensuring that resources and materials are prepared and available at the venue on time.

You can map all available on and off line resources for administrative and logistic support you are offering; the candidates and the client organisations may need to use them, and therefore, to know they exist.

You can receive feedback on the quality of this services through questionnaires; surveys; interview reports; tutorial meetings; mentor reports, etc.

Key Action 7.2 Establish and put in place procedures for safely and securely managing confidential assessment materials

Quality Measures	Quality indicators
1. Processes are operative to ensure that confidential assessment materials are always kept safely and securely.	1. Data management protection policy (including online candidates or candidates at a distance when appropriate). 2. Definition of 'confidential assessment material'. 3. Establish procedures for safe and secure storage 4. Ensure that procedures like audit or monitoring are operating

Throughout the assessment process, there is some information where you will be as transparent as possible. But some information which is specifically used during the design and delivery stages should remain confidential.

Confidential assessment materials are defined as those documents related to the delivery of the assessment that should not be seen by candidates prior to delivery. Some examples of confidential assessment materials may be written or oral test questions or simulation plans which require the candidate to react to a change in the situation or new information.

Management of confidential assessment materials involves all aspects from receiving materials, storing them and using them during the design and delivery of assessments.

Measures for safe and secure management of assessment materials include:
- New staff should be carefully coached and trained before being allowed to access confidential assessment materials.
- If assessment materials are being delivered or transported, there should be a system to sign for them and a log kept to track all incoming and outgoing materials. The log must include all awarding body deliveries with the number of boxes or packages received.
- Materials should be locked away in secure storage until an authorised member of staff needs to access them.

- The room or lock box used for confidential materials should not be used to house unrelated equipment such as an IT server, boiler, electrical units or archive materials. This will help to prevent unauthorised access.
- Access to this room/storage must be restricted to members of staff directly involved in the administration of examinations.

PCs and portable devices that contain confidential assessment materials should:
- Be password-protected to prevent unauthorised use of the device and unauthorised access to information held on the device.
- Have passwords of sufficient strength and changed on a regular basis.
- Be logged off or 'locked' when left unattended for any period of time.

Key Action 7.3 Store candidates' information using secure and appropriate data-management procedures

Quality Measures	Suggested Quality indicators
1. Data management procedures are documented to ensure secure storage of candidate information.	1. A documented data management process. 2. Structured and indexed storage of candidate information. 3. Identified role with responsibility for data management. 4. Security of candidate information protected by appropriate means 5. Data retention policy. 6. Knowledge of and compliance with local data retention law.

You should implement national legal requirements for data protection.
The guidance in this handbook may complement national requirements
but should not be used as a substitute.

A system to register and identify candidates should be established and records must be accurate and up-to-date.

You should define what candidate information will be gathered and stored and any additional candidate information beyond this scope should not be collected unless there is a specific reason to do so. It is also important to determine the length of time that candidate information and records will be kept for and to establish a secure process for deleting records.

It is essential to regularly check the accuracy of the information and ensure that there is no record of unnecessary, redundant or superfluous information.

You should define data management procedures that will enable you to store candidate information securely whether in hard copy or electronic format. Storage for hard copy (paper based) records should be lockable if the information is confidential. Electronic records of confidential information should also be appropriately secured and there should be a system for

backing up information stored electronically. Some appropriate means to secure protected information can be:

- limited number of key holders

- secure rooms

- safes

- IT security passwords

- backup processes...

Data management procedures should define who can access candidate information and this should only be accessible to staff who need this information to do their jobs. Candidates should also be able to access their information and records.

You need procedures in place to properly evaluate requests from other organisations for access to personal data in your possession. Such procedures should assist you in assessing whether the release of personal data is fully justifiable under national legislation on data protection. In any case, fax machines should not be used for transmitting sensitive documents.

Where personal or sensitive data is held on applications and databases with relevant security and access controls in place, additional controls should be considered that would prevent such data from being copied or misused.

Paper records and paper files containing personal data and sensitive information about the candidates should:
- be handled in such a way as to restrict access only to those persons with reasons to access them;
- be locked away when not required;
- be kept hidden from callers to offices;
- follow a secure disposal of confidential waste.

Key Action 7.4 Make sure assessment results are delivered and can be retrieved (if necessary) in good time

Quality Measures	Suggested Quality indicators
1. Audit trails show timely delivery of assessment results to candidates. 2. The process for the retrieval of assessment results is documented.	1. Audit of assessment results. 2. Service level agreements for delivery and retrieval of assessment results. 3. Feedback from candidates. 4. Candidate requests are responded to according to service level agreements. Interviews with candidates.

Under KA 3.6 "Deliver assessment reports and recognised badges/certificates, if available", we cover all the items related to content issues, the decision from the professional side whether to deliver a recognition or not, in which format and to whom; while here we cover just the administrative tasks related to delivery and retrieval of results.

Timely delivery and retrieval of assessment results is a core function of any assessment provider. Client organisations will depend on the timely delivery and retrieval of results to facilitate efficiency in recruitment and performance management processes. Candidates will be eager to receive their results and could become unduly stressed if they are not received in a reasonable timeframe.

Where possible, it is ideal for assessment results to be delivered immediately following the final assessment step. However, this may not always be possible as the determination of results will take deliberation between jury members and consideration of multiple factors.

You need to establish a policy indicating the maximum time frame required for delivery and retrieval of assessment results and monitor to ensure you are adhered to. Candidates and client organisations should be made aware of when they can expect to receive assessment results after the assessment is conducted and in what form (i.e. badge, certificate, and letter).

Retrieval of assessment results are often requested because the original results were lost or where a candidate needs to present evidence of their competence to a prospective employer or academic institution for their ongoing career development. Regardless of the reasons, you must strive to meet these requests as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Key Action 7.5 Keep candidates' information and records confidential

Quality Measures	Suggested Quality indicators
1. Secure methods of maintaining confidentiality of candidates' information and records are used.	1. Data retention policy (including distance / online candidates when appropriate). 2. Identified role with responsibility for maintaining confidentiality. 3. Documented processes for storage of candidates' information and records.

You need to have in place a policy of how candidate information will be shared and make candidates and client organisations aware of this during the application procedure. It is important for candidates to be aware of whether any of their information will be shared and if so, with whom and for what purpose. For example, where a client organisation has funded the assessment service, they will likely expect access to the candidates' records. Where assessment is self-funded, you should not share candidate's information with third parties without the candidate's consent.

If candidates' records will be routinely shared with an external organisation, for example an accrediting body, you must make this clear to candidates in advance.

Annexes (Tools and Templates)

Further Resources and information related to Standard 7: Administration

Protecting the confidentiality of Personal Data Guidance Note (2008)
https://www.dataprotection.ie/documents/guidance/GuidanceFinance.pdf

HPass